

The Reception of the Legend of Hero and Leander

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The Reception of the Legend of Hero and Leander

By

Brian Murdoch



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LEIDEN | BOSTON

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To Elizabeth Rachel Gymer



*Love is a golden bubble, full of dreams,
That waking breaks, and fills us with extremes.*

CHAPMAN



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Preface

This book arose from a preoccupation with the Greek tale of Hero and Leander in various contexts — reading, writing and teaching — over several decades, which gave rise in the 1970s to articles on the medieval versions of the tale and on Grillparzer's drama. A taste for Ovid, especially the *Heroides* and the *Metamorphoses*, reinforced this, together with an interest in the structure of narratives and the theory of storytelling. The literary relationship of love and death, *eros* and *thanatos*, most notably in the love story of Tristan and Isolde, also contributed, as did (perhaps less obviously) a side-interest in parody. The number of reworkings, and the range of styles and forms (serious and otherwise) in which the love-story of Hero and Leander has been treated are of themselves fascinating. There is always tension: we want Leander to survive as much as Hero does, even though we know that he will not. The core of the narrative is brief, the number of questions that it poses very extensive.

Max Jellinek attempted a study of the theme in literature in 1890 (there were some earlier ones in Latin) and managed to look at a good number of versions. More recently, annotated editions and translations of single texts often include comparative surveys, and there are also studies that are language- or period-related. A scholarly and attractive examination of the tale in antiquity and the middle ages by Silvia Montiglio appeared when this study was about two-thirds complete, and it taught me much about the Byzantine versions. However, aside from a few inevitable overlaps (and healthy differences of opinion), most drama, ballads and lyrics, epic poems in and after the renaissance, and the whole (surprisingly large) area of parody and burlesque lie outside her time-frame. My aim is to demonstrate the lasting nature of the tale by the way in which it continues as a theme right down to the present, as comedy as well as tragedy.

Research methodology has changed radically in recent years as modern resources have made it incomparably easier to identify and to locate materials. This work could not have been undertaken without the internet. Digitisation — through projects like the Biblioteca Digital Hispánica, its Italian equivalent and those of major German state libraries, the Gallica site of the French Bibliothèque Nationale, the Library of Congress, the Internet Archive, Google Books and others — has made available early editions and even manuscripts which would not have been accessible at all only a few years ago, even with unlimited admission to the best libraries and generous travel grants to visit them. When Jellinek was working on his study in the 1880s he assumed that a seventeenth-century play by François de la Selve was lost, and he was nearly correct; but it had survived in a unique copy and can now be read online.

Jellinek also had to rely on a friend for information about opera libretti and offered the results in a sketchy footnote. Internet resources now permit proper identification of most of the works he listed, and there are digital versions of several of them. Even Jellinek's own work of 1890 can now be read online more easily than in my by now somewhat fragile copy. This will doubtless be the pattern for future literary research. The list of relevant works will always be incomplete, and even in the electronic age some texts still cannot be tracked down, nor is it probably even desirable to pursue every single version. There are, however, good grounds for attempting as full a study of Hero and Leander as possible; the tale is an easily understood love-story involving human effort and the malignancy of fate. What the tale leaves unsaid has afforded opportunities for narrative development in all kinds of different genres in many languages. It is protean, begging an incremental series of questions which literary responses try to answer. Its versatility is such that it lends itself to high (and indeed low) comedy as well as serious treatments. It can be a two-line epigram or an (overly) extensive Latin epic, a sonnet, a shadow-play, an opera, or a three-minute pop song. One of the most recent versions takes the form of a graphic novel, a comic book. There are literary high points in many cultures: Ovid, Musaios, Marlowe, Bocángel, Scarron (a burlesque), Schiller, Grillparzer, Housman. Others have been unjustly neglected, while some have thoroughly deserved their consignment to literary oblivion, although even these sometimes make interesting case-studies. A broad overview can demonstrate the shifting responses to a tale recognised even in classical antiquity as being of great antiquity, but which more recently may or may not be viewed (or even recognised) as a classical tale as such. Its reduction in the folk-ballad and folk-tale is also of interest, and even allusions and passing references can be instructive as indicators of reception.

There are large areas of artistic response to the tale which are beyond the scope of a work of this kind, except for the very occasional tangential comment: the many paintings based on the tale are one example, representations in pure music another, as in symphonies, tone poems, or in a Schumann *Phantasiestück*. Even when looking at literary texts with a musical connection, from operas to folk-ballads, one dimension will inevitably largely be lost. A combination of chronological and generic approaches seems to offer a reasonable way into the reception history, although, as with every broadly-based comparative study, consistency is never possible. It is to be hoped, however, that the examination of specific texts will offer insights into the way the story works (and has been made to work) on its audiences over two millennia.

Thanks are due primarily to my wife, Ursula, for her forbearance with my decision to embark on yet another large-scale comparative study when I was already well into retirement, and for her comments throughout. My son, Adrian Murdoch, has again assisted with things classical and my daughter, Ilona Gymer, with things mythical and electronic. I have as always benefited from discussions over the years with students and with colleagues at various universities on different aspects of the subject, and scholars (notably in Hispanic studies) have been a very necessary help, especially my friends Dr Kerstin Pfeiffer and Dr Sabine Dedenbach-Salazar Saenz. None of them are to be blamed for any errors of mine, of course. I am extremely grateful, too, to the editorial staff at Brill for their help, and to the anonymous reviewers of the manuscript for their valuable comments (and sometimes necessary corrections). Manuscript reviewing is rarely given the credit it deserves, but it is invariably of enormous value to the author. I have been fortunate, finally, to have known a good many of the Grillparzer-scholars whose work I have cited, but I should like to recall here in particular my late friend and colleague Professor Mark Ward (1951–2016), with whom I collaborated on a number of different projects, and with whom I shared a genuine (if occasionally irreverent) appreciation of *Des Meeres und der Liebe Wellen*.

BM

Stirling, 2019

Hero and Leander: Constants and Questions

*Both robbed of air, we both lie in one ground,
Both whom one fire had burnt, one water drowned.*



The two-line epitaph with the title *Hero and Leander* by the seventeenth-century poet John Donne demonstrates how the essence of a familiar classical story may be captured briefly but with great literary effect.¹ The artistry lies in the declaration of unity by the lovers (“Both.... one ...”) in the context of all four elements — their loss of air, the earth in which they lie, the symbolic fire of love and the real water of the Hellespont. The effect depends on knowledge of the tale, but the names in Donne’s title are enough. Its succinct brilliance — a rhymed couplet of iambic pentameters plus a title — may be set (not entirely fairly) beside a roughly contemporary poetic treatment of the same theme, this time with the title simply ‘Leander’. The early seventeenth-century German scholar Kaspar von Barth produced a neo-Latin heroic epic in just over seventeen hundred hexameters which is, it must be said, now almost never read. A single narrative can be treated in a very wide range of different ways and with different effects.

Classical and later literature can provide us with a variety of narratives of tragic lovers defeated by the obstacles to their love. Over the course of time, some of these tales have become so familiar that a simple reference to their names, sometimes in conjunction with associated localities (which may also lend an aura of historicity), is enough to call their whole story to mind. This can, of course, equally be true for pairs of lovers whose relationship is *not* problematic (Daphnis and Chloe, Philemon and Baucis), or where the two are part of a more complex relationship (such as Troilus and Cressida), or where problems arise from the (occasionally divine) nature of one of the couple (Cupid and Psyche, Pygmalion and Galatea).

¹ Cited from: *Poetry and Prose of John Donne*, ed. A. Desmond Hawkins (London: Nelson, 1938, repr. 1955), p. 89. There are many editions of Donne in print and online.

Narratives of thwarted and ultimately tragic love fall usually into the category of *fabula*, a memorable narrative, a folk-tale, or *legenda*, 'something (written down) for reading', which reflect and exemplify recognisable social situations. They are not usually myths, which are stories in which natural phenomena (including the creation), religious beliefs, or very basic human truths are explained or expressed, usually with a supernatural element. Even without invoking the (usually paired) categorization of myth as tales of gods and heroes, a myth must have a broad implication. Love stories are more usually personal. A lesson or moral may be derived from these tales or legends, but they need not have the general nature of myth. In the case of tragic love-stories like that of Hero and Leander, the general truth that death always does part lovers eventually is of course embedded in the narrative; but the tragic element and the youth of the lovers gives quite a different emphasis. The terms 'myth' and 'legend' are frequently conflated, even in critical writing, and they are not in any case contrastive, simply indicative of different types of story, but although there may well be some disadvantages in too rigid a distinction, it is still useful to keep them separate, especially since the term 'myth' is used so broadly, often simply in opposition to something real.

The concept of legend is frequently associated with hagiography, but the term is not restricted to the saint's life; it is simply the written form of the basic story, the *fabula*.² The parallel with hagiographic legends as such can, however, be instructive. While these can and regularly do have miraculous elements, they are presented as stories which are true, as representations of events which have actually happened in the past to a given individual. Relics of saints are common enough as supposed testimony to the truth of the stories, and hagiographic legends also point regularly to apparently corroborative external elements: "and the rock behind which the saint was miraculously concealed from the pursuing enemy may be seen to this day." Similar references are sometimes

2 Of the many works defining these categories, see for example André Jolles, *Einfache Formen* ([1930] Darmstadt: WBG, 1958), and for a more complex consideration, the introduction by Margaret Alexiou, *After Antiquity: Greek Language, Myth, and Metaphor* (Ithaca and London: Cornell UP, 2002), pp. 1–16. G. S. Kirk, *Myth* (Cambridge: CUP, 1970), pp. 172–251 categorizes myths with reference to the distinction between *Göttersage* and *Heldensage*, and for an earlier classification see Lewis Spence, *The Outlines of Mythology* (London: Watts, 1944), especially pp. 45–69. There is a good description by another expert in Robert Graves's introduction to the *New Larousse Encyclopaedia of Mythology* (London: Hamlyn, 1959, new ed. 1968), pp. v–viii. Robert Graves's *The Greek Myths* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, new ed. 1960) does not include the story of Hero and Leander. On the broadest definition of myth as a story representing a basic human element, see the different essays in: *Mythology*, ed. Pierre Marsanda (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972).

made to Hero's tower still being visible at the time of the story-telling. The intent of the hagiographic legend, too, is to inspire and to serve as a model, but only to a necessarily limited extent: *admiranda non imitanda*. The reader or listener cannot match the saint, or indeed Hero or Leander, but can at least strive towards same intensity of saintly piety or of their love, to imitate at least a part of the story.³ The story of Hero and Leander is itself Christianised by being turned into a Marian miracle in one medieval version, and more general Christian morals are applied to it as well.

One tragic love-story, that of Orpheus and Eurydice, provides an example of a genuine myth, since it embodies an essential truth and requires the intervention of a god. These lovers are separated not by social factors but by death itself, and this is a story about death. Their separation is the starting point, and this is irreversible, despite the supernatural offer of an apparently possible escape. The escape from the underworld inevitably fails when Orpheus breaks the divinely-imposed condition not to look back. The myth expresses an absolute: that death cannot be overcome, and in the many literary treatments of this narrative it is only very rarely indeed that Orpheus returns with his queen and lives happily ever after; the Shetland Ballad of *King Orfeo*, where this does happen, seems artificially truncated. "There is no 'but' with death", says the medieval English *Sir Orfeo*.

Fables or legends of tragic lovers are rather different. One narrative in which two lovers are prevented from coming together by family or tribal hostility is that of Pyramus and Thisbe in Babylon. The same applied to their more modern parallels, Romeo and Juliet in Verona, whose forenames have become a tag for any doomed lovers and whose surnames, Montague and Capulet, have become equally proverbial to indicate warring houses. The key element in these two tales, and the feature which affords a memorability to both, is the suicide of one partner after assuming, wrongly, that the other is dead.

A later comparable narrative, in which the obstacle is the (loveless) marriage of one of the couple to a third party, leading to an adulterous and for that reason intrinsically doomed relationship, is that of Tristan and Isolde, which also has specific geographical settings in Ireland, Cornwall and Brittany. The

3 The standard work on saints's legends remains that by Hippolyte Delehaye, *Les légendes hagiographiques* (Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 2nd ed. 1906). The introduction, pp. 1–67 is particularly useful, also on the movement from the created story to a shaped, written form. There are also completely fictitious saints, of course. I take the (fortuitous) example of the saint's miraculous escape from the life of St Meriadoc, a Breton saint who appears also in Cornish drama as St Meriasek (the rock afterwards bears his name), and who cannot be identified with any genuine individual in spite of localised connections.

love is thwarted from the outset by a major social convention, the (political) marriage of Isolde to the King of Cornwall, who is also Tristan's master. The narrative addition in some versions that the pair fall in love by the external force of an accidentally taken and irresistible love-potion is a reinforcement rather than a narrative necessity, and the potion (the same word as poison) underlines further the potentially destructive force of love. The repeated efforts of the lovers to avoid detection, but also to cope with the conflict of loyalties is echoed in many literary variations, from Guinevere and Lancelot to the modern novel of adultery, although the original narrative has been reworked frequently enough down to Wagner and Thomas Hardy.

Legends of lovers thwarted or doomed by natural or social factors can, it is true, acquire non-essential elements of (aetiological) myth through the addition of a final metamorphosis — the origins of the colour of the mulberry in Ovid's version of Pyramus and Thisbe, or the rose growing on a thorn over the graves of various doomed lovers, including Tristan and Isolde. These elements are simply grafted onto the basic story, however, and can as easily be left off without any effect on the narrative. Such additions do not turn the whole thing into a myth.

In contrast to the tale of Orpheus, in which Eurydice's death is the starting-point, the tales of the other doomed couples all end with a *Liebestod*, the death of them both. A further common feature is that they are typically set in the (remote) past. Both of these elements apply, too, in a somewhat different model of thwarted and ultimately tragic love. The classically recorded tale of Hero and Leander is again better seen as a fable or legend, rather than as a myth. It might be argued, too, that the story can be representative of an aspect of human existence, in this case the force of the sexual urge in the face of natural or societal obstacles, and it may even express the view that love of such great intensity cannot, and here indeed does not last. However, it presents a specifically human set of events, and although the gods may in some versions appear to play violent or capricious roles, their position in the story is not essential, and the tale does not depend upon them, but upon human or natural forces. Any role attributed later to the gods is secondary and ambiguous, and it is indeed variously manipulated or interpreted in literary versions, sometimes by the characters in the story itself. The story does not necessarily express even the impossibility of defying the gods. One might read the error of *hubris* into Leander's actions, but that itself is only a kind of human arrogance, and the tragic outcome may depend equally upon a non-deterministic fate. There is no divinely-imposed proscription, and it is important that, within the framework of the story, the outcome is not inevitable. Even before Orpheus was given the

condition by Hermes, his tragedy was fixed; Eurydice was already dead, the parting had already happened. Here, until we reach the ending, Leander *might* survive. He and Hero fall in love, obstacles are presented to this love, Leander thinks he can overcome them. For a time, he can, but eventually he dies in the attempt, and this leads to her suicide.

As a narrative model this story is far simpler and more open than all those mentioned thus far. The names, Hero and Leander, are as familiar a pairing as the others, as is the location, the Hellespont (the Dardanelles). Leander swims (regularly) across the notoriously treacherous water from his home in Abydos in the Troad to that of his lover, Hero, in Sestos, in Thrace, on what is now the Gallipoli peninsula. The distance is slightly less than a mile, and is realistically possible for a strong swimmer, rather than one possessed of supernatural or mythical strength, so that this act does not make the story into a *Heldensage*. However, the cold wildness of the water, which is often stressed in literary versions, is genuine, since currents from the Aegean and the Sea of Marmara may clash dangerously and melt-waters can chill it. Byron, who famously undertook the swim in 1810 and who thought that others may have tried before him, commented that the currents brought the distance up to the equivalent of four miles. He also put off his attempt once because of the coldness. Two hundred years later, in 2010, a large group of male and female swimmers undertook the swim, the group including, according to press reports, the son of the present Baron Byron. The swim across the Hellespont has in fact become a regular event, and is now even marketed as an attraction to the more athletic tourist ("a challenging but achievable iconic swim"). Leander (and also Byron) are being used in advertising much in the way the legend itself is used on early Greek coins from Abydos or Sestos.

Technically Leander swims from Asia to Europe, a point made already in Lucan's *Pharsalia* in the first century⁴ and regularly underlined or developed in later works, although it is usually incidental to the story. The scene is occasionally moved, sometimes simply up the Sea of Marmara to the Bosphorus, or even to another body of water entirely. There is an earlier classical naming-story for the Hellespont itself, frequently invoked in versions of the Hero and Leander narrative, in which Helle, the sister of Phrixos, drowns after falling from the mythical flying ram, whose golden fleece was later so eagerly pursued. Leander eventually drowns in a storm when the lamp, which Hero customarily lights in her tower to guide him, is obscured by the weather, blown out or

4 *De bello civili* IX, 953–8, with a reference to the story: see the Loeb edition and translation by J. D. Duff (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1928).

extinguished for some other reason. She sees his body, and then drowns herself or commits suicide some other way, sometimes by throwing herself from the tower in which she lives (or to which she is confined; it is both high and solid), or by using Leander's own dagger, or she dies of a broken heart.

It has been plausibly suggested that the core of all this was an actual event, which took place at a sufficient chronological distance to have obscured all but the memorable feat of swimming, and that it was maintained and perhaps expanded in oral tradition. We cannot, of course, assess the development of the tale in that tradition (though in a sense it returns to orality in the ballad-versions and in folk-tales), but it enters written literature at a very early stage. Since there are no intrinsic side-issues in the basic narrative, the essence is of the novella rather than the novel, although it has been presented in virtually all genres.⁵ George Chapman, reworking the tale at the very end of the sixteenth century, inadvertently overstressed the antiquity of the tale when he referred to the protagonists as “the first lovers that ever muse shrined in the temple of memory”,⁶ but although this actually arises from the regular confusion of Musaios Grammatikos, the Grammarian, author of a late Greek poem on the theme, with a legendary pre-Homeric singer also named Musaios, the description is not an unreasonable one. Even the classical versions of this tale treat it as a narrative of some antiquity, and this becomes part of its tradition. That the location in the Hellespont links back to the even more ancient narrative of Helle reinforces the point. It remains an “Ancient and Esteemed Romance” even in an eighteenth-century chapbook which deviates, as it happens, very considerably from the original plot.

What is immediately striking about the tale is the astonishing number of literary re-workings in different genres — to say nothing of iconographic or musical reflections — that it has attracted. Many of the major cultures in Europe have over the centuries produced at least one large-scale version of literary importance: Ovid in Latin, Musaios in Greek, Marlowe in English, Boscán, Góngora, and Bocángel in Spanish (where it seems to have been especially popular), Schiller, Grillparzer, and the *Königskinder*-ballads in German,

5 Theoreticians (notably in Germany) of the novella highlight the concept of the memorable feature, referred to as a ‘falcon’ in connection with one of Boccaccio's tales in the *Decameron*, as a tag to the narrative: see E. K. Bennett, *A History of the German Novelle*, rev. ed. by H. M. Waidson (Cambridge: CUP, 1961), pp. 14–6. Here the lamp fulfills that role. See also Franz Schmitt-von Mühlenfels, *Pyramus und Thisbe. Rezeptionstypen eines Ovidischen Stoffes* (Heidelberg: Winter, 1972), pp. 125–50.

6 Christopher Marlowe, *The Complete Poems and Translations*, ed. Stephen Orgel (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971), p. 41.

Scarron in French, others in Dutch or Flemish. If shorter lyrics are included we can add Garcilaso de la Vega, Hölderlin, Donne, Byron, Tennyson, Housman. There are many more re-workings in these and other languages and genres by lesser-known writers, some justly forgotten, others worth rescuing from obscurity. Not only are there stage adaptations in genres like drama or opera, which might seem unexpected for a story involving swimming, storms, overt sexual gratification, and an act of suicide, but the story appears in very different modes, not just as tragedy, but also regularly as comedy. Burlesques form a large part of the history of the reception.

The basic narrative begs all kinds of questions. The posing and answering of questions which arise from it becomes cumulative, and it is this which underlies the extensive tradition. There is no given reason for the separation of Hero and Leander apart from physical geography, nor for the apparent need for secrecy. We do not know how they met and fell in love, let alone what obstacles are placed in the way of their love. There is no love-potion, and if Cupid's darts do often play a role in later versions, the human protagonists are not aware of them. The constants of the story are the efforts of Leander to cross the Hellespont, Hero's act of guiding him from the tower in which she lives (or is confined), and the final failure, prompting her suicide. There is, in fact, very little intrinsic storytelling, although the ending, the double death, is clear. The relationship itself is a straightforward sexual one, without much complexity or subterfuge beyond the fact that the love seems to have to be clandestine, so that Leander must swim at night and leave at dawn. There are no misinterpreted deaths, be they by lion or by poison, no complex interplay of family loyalties, no marital deceptions, and no doomed attempt to cheat a specific decree of the gods. The guiding lamp or torch — usually an oil-lamp is assumed, but torches and candles are mentioned, or the reference is simply to 'light' or 'flame' — can be an important feature, and it can also have a symbolic function. Its nature is not discussed, except occasionally in burlesques. Sometimes, however, it is afforded little or no importance, and Leander sometimes misses it on his final journey simply because of the weather. Within the long history of the narrative, then, various answers are provided for different questions: the beginning of the love between the pair, the details of its development, from persuasion to consummation, the reasons behind the act of swimming, their feelings when apart, the need for secrecy, the extinguishing of the light, the death of Leander, the suicide of Hero. Details of their obsequies and speculative or direct details of their afterlife are also notable subjects.

The unemotional summary of the story provided by the second Vatican Mythographer sometime between the ninth and twelfth centuries is telling:

Leander Abydenus et Hero Sestias fuerunt invicem se amantes. Sed Leander natatu ad Heron ire consueverat per fretum Hellespontium, quod Seston et Abydon civitates interfluit. Extincta autem casu face, quam Hero statuto tempore praetendere solebat, iuvenis tempestate periit. Cuius corpus quum ad puellam delatum fuisset, ipsa se praecipitavit in mare.⁷

(Leander from Abydos and Hero from Sestos loved one another. Leander used to swim to Hero across the Hellespont, which lies between the towns of Sestos and Abydos. Once by accident the light, which Hero used to light at a set time, was extinguished, and the young man drowned in a storm. When his body was washed up in front of the girl, she threw herself into the sea.)

The simplicity of this account makes the constants of the story clear and leaves many questions open, although even here there is already some interpretation and emphasis: the light is extinguished 'by accident', and the lovers are young. The background is unexplained, but the lamp is set regularly by Hero. That she does so in a tower is not mentioned, although it is a very early element of the tale. This makes it clear that Leander swims at night, which in its turn implies a need for secrecy. This version contains no references whatsoever to the gods, and the story as such might be thought of as pre-dating the gods. To be sure, they are soon introduced as personifications of the natural

7 In Hans Färber, *Hero und Leander. Musaios und die weiteren antiken Zeugnisse*. (Munich: Heimeran, 1961), p. 74. With Färber, the name Musaios is retained here, although the Latinised form is often encountered (as is the more accurate transliteration Mousaios, although an opening syllable echoing 'muse' seems preferable). This will keep Musaios Grammatikos apart from his mythical namesake, usually referred to as Musaeus of Ephesus, and indeed from the eighteenth-century German Romantic writer Johann Karl August Musaeus. Färber's excellent collection of classical and medieval Greek and Latin materials (with German translations) is a convenient source for Latin and Greek texts from Vergil to Baudri. There are three anonymous *Mythographi Vaticani*, whose collections were composed at different times between the ninth and the twelfth centuries. The versions in the first and third Vatican collections, which Färber also cites, are more expansive and the third includes allegorization. They are discussed in detail by Silvia Montiglio, *The Myth of Hero and Leander* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2017), p. 105f., in relation to Fulgentius, another mythographer. Here and elsewhere translations into English are mine unless otherwise indicated. It is noteworthy that the popular and much reprinted collection by Edith Hamilton (1867–1963), *Mythology. Timeless Tales of Gods and Heroes* (New York: Little, Brown 1942; New York and Scarborough, Ontario: Mentor, 1969), p. 293 has a summary in four sentences which is very like the Mythographer's, although Hero is a priestess. That in *Bullfinch's Mythology* (London: Spring Books, 1964), pp. 77–9 is again similar. 'Mythology' is used in a loose sense in these cases.

forces of wind and sea, which they control, or as affecting both the love (itself another natural and unpredictable force, given shape as Eros/Amor/Cupid, for example) and the tragic outcome. Once embodied, they acquire human attributes of their own, malice, vengefulness, even occasionally frisky sexual desires of their own towards the characters. As soon as Hero becomes a priestess, as she does in Musaios's work in the late fifth century, Aphrodite/Venus (and her son, Eros/Amor/Cupid) can be invoked in different ways as a goddess of physical or of chaste love, but they can be a help or a hindrance, or even indifferent. The gods operate on a different plane and are not even consistent, so that their motives may always be questioned, and eventually they disappear — or at least recede — from the story again.

In the absence of established explanations, literary versions introduce elements which match those found in the other love-stories mentioned to provide reasons for Leander's need to swim the Hellespont. Classical and later writers speculate on family or social pressures (as with Pyramus or Romeo) separating the lover, for reasons that are sometimes specific, at other times less clear. In Ovid's very early version Hero suspects that it is because she is Thracian and therefore deemed inferior. In the basic tale neither is married, so that this is not an adultery narrative. However, the identification of Hero as a priestess is a very significant development. Dedication to the goddess takes the place of marriage, and the breaking of religious, rather than marital vows give a new tension to the tale. The question of hubris is intensified if it is a defiance of the gods, rather than just over-confidence in the face of the elements. Later texts refine the nature of the goddess to whom Hero has dedicated herself. Aphrodite is after all the goddess of love and should therefore approve of the relationship. But when the goddess is defined as the Platonic Aphrodite Urania, goddess of chaste and abstract love, there can be no excuses. The hagiographic text referred to already — a brief tale in medieval Latin — makes the lovers into a cleric and most significantly a nun, making very clear how the cultural context can be shifted. The parallels between Hero's vows to Aphrodite and a nun taking the veil perhaps explain why the story continues to be so popular in Christian Europe. A straightforward love story could be treated sentimentally (this does remain a possibility), but the breaking of a vow adds a dimension of conflict.

Some questions are entirely pragmatic. How is the lamp extinguished, if indeed it is? Or does the storm simply prevent Leander from seeing it? Why is Leander never seen by anyone? Could they not both live in Abydos or Sestos? It is normally assumed, too, that Leander drowns on the way towards Hero, but this is not always the case, though his body is usually washed up where she can find it. Some of the more obvious questions are answered in comic versions

in particular, such as why Leander must swim. Clearly it is because he does not own a boat; there is a nice irony, therefore, in the naming of a celebrated English rowing club and indeed a class of naval frigates after Leander, but his name is, to be fair, also occasionally (if questionably) commemorated in the name of swimming clubs.

The possibilities for psychological exploration are correspondingly broad, and from classical times onwards the thought-processes of the lovers are fully explored. In asking why Leander chooses to swim at all on the final occasion, when the night, the season and the sea make this a particularly perilous act, the answers might be excessive desire or sexual drive, coupled with over-confidence in his abilities, or simple frustration. It can be asked, too, why Hero chooses to light the guiding lamp or torch on a stormy night, and whether she feels any anxiety or guilt about doing so. Does she want him to stay at home and be safe, or risk the elements to come to her? When Leander sees it, is he encouraged by the force of his love, or does he worry that if he does not make the attempt, Hero or the world at large, or even Leander himself, might think worse of him. Guilt and blame may be felt by individual characters or imputed by others: to Hero for lighting the lamp to encourage Leander even though the seas are rough; to Leander for the folly of undertaking the enterprise; or to fate, the gods, the wind, or even some individual (anyone from Hero's mother to a false nun or a high priest) for extinguishing the lamp. Leander's dying thoughts may be developed, as may — more fully — the emotions of Hero as she waits in vain for Leander, or when she finds his corpse. Hero's feelings are all understandable in modern terms. To an extent, of course, the perception or presentation of emotions may differ at different historical periods — in classical times, for example, in the renaissance, or in neo-classical literature in the nineteenth century — but the universals of love, desire, longing, anxiety, or loss remain, even within a systematised literary construct, such as *amour courtois*.⁸

There is some scope for the introduction of new characters, some more peripheral than others. In different versions both acquire proactive parents, siblings, friends and confidants. Hero, like Juliet, has a nurse, old and sleepy in the earliest full version, but who can move from a “dwarfish beldame” in

8 See Denis de Rougemont, *Passion and Society*, trans. Montgomery Belgion (London: Faber, 1962 [= rev. ed. 1956]) on the Tristan story and courtly love. For some recent considerations of the emotions in the classical period (often focused on specific cases, though not always in literature) see *Emotion, Genre, and Gender in Classical Antiquity*, ed. Dana LaCourse Munetanu (London: Bloomsbury, 2013); David Konstan, *Affect and Emotion in Greek Literature* (Oxford Handbooks Online, 2015), especially the section on ‘Love and Jealousy’; *Emotion and Persuasion in Classical Antiquity*, ed. Ed Sanders and Matthew Johncock (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner, 2016).

Marlowe to a vigorous and lively figure assisting the lovers in some medieval and renaissance versions. As a priestess Hero sometimes has temple companions. Occasionally the principals are even provided with rivals for their affection (which is almost never reciprocated), leading to extraneous plots. Those motivated by love (or lust) for Hero may include the local potentate or even the high priest himself.

The range of possibilities in the receptive process may be illustrated by a well-known complex of versions. The late sixteenth-century English poem by Christopher Marlowe has a magnificently erotic beginning, but his unfinished text, which also contains some comic elements, was continued twice. George Chapman, who complained that he had been left to describe the tragic part, gave Leander a sister, and added a few invented personifications, such as Eronusis, Dissimulation. Marlowe's work was also continued very differently (if not very expertly) by Henry Petowe, who turned the whole thing into a romance, with Hero imprisoned by a frustrated prince until Leander is able to rescue and marry her so that they can live happily ever after. Like others, Chapman and Petowe both introduce an Ovidian metamorphosis at the end: the pair become goldfinches after their tragic death in Chapman, and after a long and happy life are turned into pine-trees in Petowe. Clearly this kind of ending was often felt to be more satisfactory to the reader than the simple death of the pair. Propertius, in a poem addressed to Cynthia, claims that: "Traicit et fati litora magnus amor" (great love even crosses the shores of death). Hero is not amongst Propertius's *formosae ... chorus heroinae*, his beautiful heroines, but she might well have been.⁹ The reunion of Hero and Leander in the Elysian Fields after death is sometimes offered as a final (usually speculative) element, although since death really does mean separation, that solution is never very comfortable. Any actual reunion in the afterlife is only a hope. The self-reflective aspect of the story, however, demands at least that the pair and the intensity of their love live on in literary fame. It is worth remembering that their young love always remains young. Tragic or not, there is no danger here, therefore, of the pessimistic view expressed in an English ballad that as love "grows older, so it grows colder, and fades away like the morning dew." Indeed, one late version even makes their death into a blessing, because love at this stage is at its best, although this line of thought is as questionable as the positive declaration that young men fallen in battle shall not grow old.

9 From the poem 'Non ego nunc tristes vereor, mea Cynthia, Manes' (I do not now fear the sad underworld, Cynthia). There is a text with translation in *The Penguin Book of Latin Verse*, ed. Frederick Brittain (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1962), p. 38f.

Amongst all the elaborations, additions, and varied explanations, even apparent constants such as the fact that it is the man who is the swimmer are occasionally varied as well. Usually, however, the gender archetype is clear: Leander is active and expressly masculine, Hero self-consciously passive, aware of the limitations upon what she can do as a woman within her society but guiding him with her lamp and welcoming him into her isolated tower. In terms of sexual archetypes at the simplest level the male strives actively to attain a sexual goal, with the passive assistance and then positive reception by the female.¹⁰ In Ovid's early version Hero complains that there are many activities open to Leander, whereas she is bound to her passive role, confined within her tower. The thoughts that pass through her mind are correspondingly more complex and ramified, however.

The focus upon situational elements can be underlined in brief allusions to the tale such as Petrarch's summary in the *Trionfo d'Amore*: "Leandro in mare ed Ero a la fenestra", Leander in the sea, Hero at the window.¹¹ Such brief allusions or casual references to the tale, which are both early and numerous, attest to its familiarity and structure. The classical geographer Strabo in the first century BC speaks of 'Hero's tower' (*Herous purgon*) as an identifiable place and gives the distance across the water as seven stadia, just under a mile, although he does not mention the currents. There are various wall-illustrations of the story at Pompeii which may derive from the *Heroides*, possibly directly from illustrated copies; they show the single scene of Leander swimming towards Hero, who is waiting by her tower.¹² So, too, in the late second and early third centuries of our era bronze coins were minted at Abydos and Sestos under the Roman emperors Septimius Severus, Caracalla and Severus Alexander showing on the reverse in the simpler version an image of Leander swimming towards Hero

10 A more complex analysis which might see Hero in Jungian terms as the (accidentally) dark *anima* might be possible. But Hero is in most versions a priestess in name only. See M.-L. von Franz, "The Process of Individuation", in Carl G. Jung (and later M.-L. von Franz), edd., *Man and His Symbols* ([1964] New York: Dell, 1968), pp. 157–254, especially pp. 186–227. It has been noted that romantic love stories are relatively rare in antiquity, and this has been linked with the later development of the concept of individuality. See (with reference to the tale) Oswald Schwarz, *The Psychology of Sex* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1949), p. 97f., and the entire chapter on 'Love'.

11 Francesco Petrarca, *Opere*, ed. Giovanni Ponte (Milan: Mursia, 1968), p. 276 (*Trionfo d'Amore* III, 21).

12 The choice of this single scene (without the catastrophe) argues for an Ovidian source as much or more than Leander's direction of swimming, often from left to right, which, as Montiglio, *Hero and Leander*, p. 48f. notes, has been linked with the unrolling of a papyrus. However, he swims from right to left in the now all but lost wall-painting from the Casa del Gallo I, of which a drawing was made in 1841 by Giuseppe Abbate.

in a tower as she holds up her lamp; in a second type there is a small figure of Eros flying above her. These coins are clearly using the familiar local tale as a kind of advertisement, a policy actually advocated in a very early decree precisely from Sestos.¹³ Later geographers tag Abydos and Sestos as being famous for the historical lovers, and the Greek historian Agathias in the sixth century has a throwaway reference to the celebrity of the town of Sestos depending solely (*monon*) on the account of Hero's lamp (*to lukhno*) and the love and death of Leander (*Leandrou eroti kai thanato*). That unadorned linking of *eros* and *thanatos* might also prompt a psychological reading, and there is always a potential for different readings of the story using sexual and other symbols — most obviously the tempestuous nature of love, linked with the sea, and in the flame of Hero's lamp.¹⁴ Writers of burlesques regularly turn sexual symbolism into fairly crude reality, however, and Marlowe even makes Neptune, who embodies the sea, into a sexual predator; elsewhere sea-nymphs make advances to Leander and Neptune acts as a pander.

A brief passage in Vergil's *Georgics* is probably the earliest literary reference to Hero and Leander, and his half-dozen lines make it clear that the tale was already so familiar by the first years of the Christian era that he had no need to put in details or even the names of the young swimmer and the girl. The youthfulness of the pair is almost invariably stressed. Clearly Leander must be young and fit enough to undertake his swim, but psychologically, too, the single-minded exclusivity of their passion for each other is that of youth. Inherent in the narrative too, though not immediate or always explicit, is the concept of rebellion, another youthful trait. Many versions make explicit that one or both

13 An illustrated study by Claire Franklin, "Sestos and Abydos, Hero and Leander: a Love Story in Coinage", appeared in *Coins Weekly* in 2014 and is available at: <https://coinsweekly.com/en/Archive/Sestos-and-Abydos-Hero-and-Leander-a-Love-Story-in-Coinage/8?&id=397&type=a> (also in German in the archive of muenzenwoche.de). See H. A. Seaby, *Greek Coins* (London: Seaby, 2nd ed. 1966) p. 126 and *The British Museum Catalogue of Greek Coins* xvii (Troas) (London: British Museum, 1894), nr. 60. There is an illustration on the title page of Färber, *Musaïos* of the simpler version (Septimius Severus, Abydos), and good images of coins minted under Caracalla and Severus Alexander in Montiglio, *Hero and Leander*, p. 52, with a discussion. On the Sestos decree see Richard Ashton, "The Hellenistic World", in: *The Oxford Handbook of Greek and Roman Coinage*, ed. William E. Metcalf (Oxford: OUP, 2012), pp.191–210, see p. 202.

14 See de Rougemont, *Passion and Society*, pp. 42–6. With Hero and Leander the critic does not need to be as defensive as was Albert Mordell, writing (admittedly in a work which first appeared in 1919) about Ovid: "No doubt the critic who examines literary masterpieces for sexual symbolism is not a popular one; but that does not alter the fact that they are there", *The Erotic Motive in Literature* (New York: Collier, rev. ed. 1962).

might be acting against parental or other authority, and this is even hinted at as early as in the version by Ovid.¹⁵

The extent to which the story was known, or is assumed to have been known, is of narrative significance of itself. It can be presented (as the allusions show) as a closed narrative, one where there can be no suspense because it is a familiar tragedy, even if (as in Ovid) the ending is not made explicit. Equally it may be an open story, assuming no knowledge and thus permitting actual suspense. The two are not mutually exclusive. Ovid creates suspense in the dreams and fears of the protagonists, and the fear can always be whether Leander is going to drown *this* time, even if we know that he must perish at some point. Parodies and burlesques, of course, always need to assume knowledge of the original if they are to make their point fully.

A much-cited and influential epigram by the Roman poet Martial referring to Leander's swimming seems to have been inspired by a marble statue (*Leandros marmoreus*), so that it refers back to what was already a representation of a recognisable story. Allusions to the tale in Greek and Latin down to the middle ages are often quite casual, as when Silius Italicus in the first century AD refers to *Leandrius Hellespontus*, 'Leander's Hellespont', allowing his legend to subsume that of Helle. Of special interest is a negative reference by the Roman orator Marcus Cornelius Fronto a century later to his dislike of what is clearly the tale (again stressing that it is of a young man and a young girl, *iuvenis, puella*) as a *fabula histrionibus celebrata*, 'a well-known theatrical story, a tale loved by performers'.¹⁶

The earliest expansive version of the story is also a literary high point. Ovid presents it in the *Heroides*, the 'letters from famous women,' in an unexpected and intriguing form: two entirely separate love-letters, where the culmination of the tragedy is adumbrated, but not shown, because Leander is unable to undertake the swim and Hero does not need to light the lamp. The letter-writers

15 See Herbert Marcuse, *Eros and Civilisation* ([1955] London: Abacus, 1972), pp. 55–63 on patriarchal oppression. Dominant patriarchs (and sometimes matriarchs) appear on both Hero's and Leander's side, but of course the rebellion ultimately fails; the tale is not a myth of phylogenesis. On the dominant legal position of the father in classical times and later regarding the marriage of a daughter, or indeed a son, see Jane F. Gardner, *Women in Roman Law and Society* (London and Sydney: Croom Helm, 1987), pp. 5–11.

16 Färber, *Musaïos*, gathers together (with German translations) a large number of classical and post-classical allusions to the tale. He cites Strabo on p. 30, Vergil and the commentary on p. 32, Paulos Silentarios and Agathias on p. 70, Silius Italicus on p. 64, and Martial and Fronto on p. 66. See Montiglio, *Hero and Leander*, pp. 177–83; she adds further Greek/Byzantine echoes of the story, mostly very slight and sometimes not much more than names. She also gives p. 200 a later geographical example in the twelfth-century chronicle by William of Tyre.

are aware of the dangers and have their premonitions, and the reader knows the outcome, but in Ovid's work the tragedy does not happen. His focus is upon youth and love, and the sexual memories in the letters are as important as the future tragedy. Ovid's work would be enormously influential, especially in combination with the more straightforwardly presented version by Musaios Grammatikos, whose brief epic (epyllion) in just over 340 lines was rediscovered in Western Europe in the renaissance and printed with a Latin translation in 1494.

Allusions to the story in medieval writers like Dante, Petrarch and Chaucer can sometimes — if not always — be significant in terms of reception, and it might even be of interest in passing to note when the theme is *not* treated. Hero is not present in Boccaccio's *Concerning Famous Women*, for example, though there are references elsewhere in his works. There are, however, full-scale medieval re-workings, mostly metrical, in French, German, Dutch, Latin and Italian, based largely on Ovid, although as the existence of the three medieval Vatican Mythographies show, there were other synopses and retellings available. The tale even finds its way into vernacular narratives of classical history as such.

The Scots writer Alexander Gray seemed (in one set of comments at least) to insist upon the fact that narratives of Hero and Leander always had to retain those names: "wherever a story has become a universal possession, overleaping national frontiers, the chief actors must be allowed to retain their own names, and the play must be played out on the original scene, even if this involves some uncouth place-names. To take an extreme example, one could not reliably tell the story of Hero and Leander in the guise of a tale about Jackie who swam the Clyde at Yoker in order to see his Jenny".¹⁷ The personal and place-names are, however, by no means vital, as Gray himself was in fact well aware and made clear later, and other critics have made the opposite point, seeing the loss of the names as perfectly natural in reductive versions, notably folk-tales and ballads. The point is illustrated in the High and Low German ballads which are clearly on the theme, but which feature two royal children, *zwei Königskinder*, adding an aristocratic lineage and retaining their youth, but losing the classical names. In this context Hero at one point is turned into a homely Germanic Elslein, Elsie, and Gray himself, in translating one of these variations, had to note that the *Königskinder* ballad has been claimed as being, "in its substance, the oldest European ballad, going back to the tale of Hero and

17 Alexander Gray, *Four and Forty. A Selection of Danish Ballads Presented in Scots* (Edinburgh: University Press, 1954), p. xv. The Scots ballad 'Clyde Water', however, is a relative of the Hero and Leander story with a direct allusion to Martial's epigram.

Leander”.¹⁸ Jockie may not have swum the Clyde, but in a group of Scots ballads too, Willie is drowned doing precisely that to reach his love. There is even a related pop song from 1959 called ‘Running Bear’, in which the young lovers have quasi-Native American names and the water is no longer the Hellespont, even if the tale is still located in what might be called the Romantic other, in the new world. There seems to be a greater nominal variation for the Hero-figure, who may be called Margaret or Julia or Tamar, depending upon where the tale has been re-set. Although many versions retain the Hellespont as a significant body of water — dangerous, separating two continents, having an appropriate naming-myth — it is as such even less necessary than the personal names. Any potentially dangerous sea, lake (usually with an island) or river will suffice, named or unnamed, familiar or not.¹⁹ The absence of the names and place-names can have various implications. On the one hand, it may simply indicate that the tale is so well-known that they are not necessary. Equally, however, it could imply that the story is one for which the audience will *not* know the outcome. It remains open whether or not the audience was able to make any connection with the original story, or whether, indeed, this would make a difference. However, it then acquires what we might call added value as a known story with the authority of antiquity: an old and true tale.

Occasionally — it must be said only *very* occasionally — the male and female roles are switched, although the story remains unmistakably that of Hero and Leander. In the middle of sixteenth century the Italian writer Giovanni Francesco Straparola wrote about a girl swimming at night to reach her lover, a hermit on an island; the names and location are once again different, as indeed is the ending, though the swimmer drowns, and a lamp is involved. It is intriguing, too, that at the end of the nineteenth century Lafcadio Hearn noted in his collection *In Ghostly Japan* the tale of a fisherman’s daughter who “had

18 Alexander Gray, *Sir Halewyn. Examples in European Balladry and Folk Song* (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1949), p. 62.

19 See the paper by Bertrand Westphal, “Les eaux de la mer agitée. Héro et Léandre. Une traversée”, in: *Le Lieu dans le mythe*, ed. Juliette Vion-Dury (Limoges: Pulim, 2002), pp. 127–40. The paper is interesting on the location (taking us down to the First World War; the resonance of the Dardanelles is somewhat different, of course). Westphal looks at a wide range of texts, and refers to many others in notes, including the modern Serbian novel by Pavić. On the Hellespont, see the interesting approach of Elizabeth Minchin, “Mapping the Hellespont with Hero and Leander: ‘The Swimming Lover and the Nightly Bride’”, in: *Myths on the Map. The Storied Landscape of Ancient Greece*, ed. Greta Hawes (Oxford: OUP, 2017; Oxford Scholarship Online, 2017), pp. 65–82 (with images of coins). In the *Königskinder* ballads the water is unnamed; in the Scots ballads, for example, the river can be the Clyde, which is large and well-known, or the Yarrow, which is not. Leander swims the Thames in some versions, but these are often burlesques; the Thames has always had quite a lot of bridges.

a lover in Ajiro ... she used to swim at night. He kept a light burning to guide her. But one dark night the light was neglected or blown out, and she lost her way and was drowned. The story is famous in Idzu." Despite the role-reversal (which Hearn, who did not know the Straparola tale, found baffling) this is still patently the narrative of Hero and Leander, imported at some stage into Japan. The guiding torch and the lack of clarity over its fatal disappearance make this clear, and it is of additional interest that the story is referred to as being well-known. It was always a classical tale, at whatever distance it crops up.²⁰

Whatever resonance the classical names may retain, there is a nice twist in the occasional sexual reversal of those character-names. Roy Booth wonders in the context of such a switch in an English ballad about "culturally deprived readers", and 'Hero' does indeed sound masculine to the English (and not just the English) ear.²¹ To be fair, this nominal confusion can be deliberate; the German comic poet Heinz Erhardt makes Hero the (male) swimmer with Lea as his beloved. However, there was a genuine confusion in the early fourteenth century, where a manual for preachers (of all things) which contains classical tales with Christian morals has the young man called (more or less) Hero and the woman (a version of) Leander, and it even cites Ovid as the source. In one modern English novel a girl calls *herself* Hero because it sounds like the noun, and most up-to-date of all, in an experimental novel by Milorad Pavić, we are told that Hero, while still being called Hero, realised that every few centuries some women's names do become men's.

Unlike the other pairs of lovers referred to already, in this case the woman's name frequently comes first, although this is by no means always the case. 'Hero and Leander' is formulaic in English and some other languages, perhaps for underlying rhythmic reasons, the first name beginning with a stress. Elsewhere — as often in Spanish, for example — the names appear in reverse order. Several texts, indeed, carry as a title only one of the names, with the implication that he (less often she) is the main character. Leander is indeed the principal agent in active terms, but the psychology of Hero is far more interesting, and dramas in particular place her in the foreground. The order of the names does not seem to be significant in gender terms, and the basic narrative does not afford real prominence to either protagonist.²² While there are versions which are plainly based upon the original narrative even without the

20 Lafcadio Hearn, *In Ghostly Japan* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1899), p. 234 (stories collected in Yaidzu). Is it too far-fetched to hear an echo of Abydos in the place name Ajiro?

21 Roy Booth, "Hero's Afterlife: Hero and Leander and 'lewd, unmannerly verse' in the Late Seventeenth Century", *Early Modern Literary Studies* 12/3 (2007), 1–24 (and online).

22 In some cases, of course, writers play with the order: "Juliet and her Romeo," "Tristan-Isôt, Isôt-Tristan". One classical exception seems to be the ordering of Dido and Aeneas, where the focus is clearly upon her.

names, there are also, finally, works which declare themselves to reflect the story because they *do* retain the names, but which do not really adhere to the known narrative. Petowe's continuation of Marlowe is one example, and we may with other versions also question the extent to which the work concerned is still really about either Hero or Leander.

Leander is censured seriously for the folly of excessive love in some ancient and medieval versions, and it is unsurprising that full-scale parodies (sometimes specifically of Ovid), or more usually and more accurately burlesques, comic variations on the whole story, appear at a relatively early stage²³ and extend into all genres over a long period as a significant part of the reception history. Love can be treated comically as well as taken seriously, and comic versions of this tale of intense love exist side-by-side with serious presentations, just as Shakespeare could demonstrate the two possibilities with *Romeo and Juliet* on the one hand and the play of the rustics in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* on the other. With Hero and Leander, there is comedy in the fragmentary version by Marlowe, but the English seventeenth century produces a plethora of Ovid-travesties and mock ballads, some sexual and scatological. Burlesques exist in all forms in many different languages, and some are very funny indeed and deserve to be better known: there are fine spoofs in German eighteenth-century writing, for example. Nor should we forget, perhaps, the most extreme homage to the tale paid by Byron, of whose own reconstructive swim across the Hellespont so much was made, principally by Byron himself.

Such is the wealth and variety of literary materials depending upon the narrative that other entire areas, like iconography, have of necessity to be left aside here. Some very early pictorial representations have been noted, but the story has regularly been taken as a subject in painting and sculpture from Titian and Rubens to such celebrated and much-reproduced nineteenth-century images as William Etty's 'Parting of Hero and Leander' in the Tate Gallery in London (or his later painting of their deaths), or Frederic Leighton's wide-eyed 'Last Watch of Hero' in Manchester. It is a nice pendant to the early representations

23 Not, however, perhaps as early as Montiglio implies, *Hero and Leander*, p. 48, when she refers to an "irreverent" allusion in the poem of the third or fourth century AD *Iudicium coci et pistoris iudice Vulcano* (Contest of a cook and a baker, judged by Vulcan) by the rhetorician Vespa (Färber, *Musaïos*, p. 68f.). There is not much to be made of an obscure and not very good word-play linked with Leander (*lacertus*, 'strong arm, muscle,' and *lacerta*, 'lizard') in an obscure and not very good work; F. J. E. Raby uses the word 'trivial': *A History of Secular Latin Poetry in the Middle Ages* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1934), I, 45. Montiglio refers also to a relief from Tunis of the late second century AD which seems to have had an inscription referring to Leander going by the light of a single candle, but her view, p. 51, of this as parodic, linking it with later works such as that by Góngora, is unconvincing. Neither this nor Vespa's poem foreshadow the extensive later burlesque tradition.

on coins that the seventeenth-century Mortlake tapestries of the tale by Francis Cleyn (or Franz Klein, ca. 1582–1658) were reproduced from the set in Bratislava on stamps of Czechoslovakia in 1974. The visual interest continues in the work of Cy Twombly and the hyperrealist sculptures by Carol Feuerman, who had an exhibition called “Hero and Leander” in 2016. Artistic interest is hardly surprising, given the attractive and decently classical pictorial possibilities of a naked athletic youth, a beautiful and sorrowing young woman (also occasionally presented as naked), stormy seas, towers, night and lamplight. The focus upon situation and circumstance in the history of the narrative is underlined by the way pictorial art highlights individual scenes: Leander in and out of the sea, the storm, Hero with her lamp, Hero’s final farewell to the dead Leander. The iconography is sometimes directly linked with specific texts, such as John Flaxman’s illustrations of Musaios. Equally, iconographical representations are sometimes provided with an associated text. To take two chronologically separate examples: the narrative was used sometimes simply as a pictorial emblem in the baroque period for the positive concept *amor vincit omnia*;²⁴ and there is a graphic (comic-book) version by Anke Feuchtenberger, which links narrative (Musaios in German) and graphic art and was in fact associated with a musical composition. Other aspects of the cultural heritage of the tale must also be left out. While we may include sung ballads, lyrics and operas from Scarlatti and Handel on to Adam Guettel and Dmitri Terzakis at the turn of the twenty-first century, there are also purely musical representations, including a *Phantasiestück* by Robert Schumann invoking the death of Leander, and a good number of tone poems, which we cannot include. Ballets and pantomime versions may, on the other hand, at least merit brief mention: a document associated with one of these even comments that the story was too well-known to need words at all.

Existing secondary studies of the theme in literature are very numerous indeed, and a formal *Forschungsbericht* is neither appropriate nor really possible. Early examples of examinations of the theme across different literatures include Paul Ristelhuber’s *De Herus et Leandri historia heroica*, which appeared in 1863, and a few decades later came the important work of Max Hermann Jellinek, who in 1890 published a survey of literary treatments which is remarkably full, given the difficulties he doubtless faced in tracking down more

24 The use of emblems may be associated with a text or a motto only. On the emblematic use, see Hartmut Freytag, “Die Embleme in Ludwigsburg und Gaarz”, in: *Ausserliterarische Wirkungen barocker Emblembücher*, ed. Wolfgang Harms and Hartmut Freytag (Munich: Fink, 1975), 19–39 and 171–93; see pp. 27 and 191. Freytag explains the moralisation of the image (one of a series of decorations on a cabinet) as the positive stressing of Leander’s fortitude.

obscure texts. Many studies have been centred upon individual works, such as the Marlowe-Chapman poems, or the German *Königskinder* ballads; others focus upon specific periods or cultures, perhaps most notably on the Spanish reception of the tale. Studies or editions of single texts regularly provide an overview of the tradition, the theme has always been popular as a dissertation topic, and there is on the internet even a Leandros-blog. An indication of ongoing scholarly interest is provided by a valuable recent work by Silvia Montiglio (2017), which concentrates upon classical and medieval texts. The sustained reception of the story in later epic treatments, ballads, drama, opera, in parodies and burlesque versions, and on into experimental modernity makes the enduring appeal of the story clear. It is the aim of this work to present the continuing tradition as fully as possible.²⁵

- 25 Max Hermann Jellinek, *Die Sage von Hero und Leander in der Dichtung* (Berlin: Speyer und Peters, 1890). The review of this work by B. Hoenig in the *Anzeiger für deutsches Altertum* 20 [*Zeitschrift für deutsches Altertum* 38] (1894), 35–8 adds further examples. See also Ludolf Malten, “Motivgeschichtliche Untersuchungen zur Sagenforschung III. Hero und Leander”, *Rheinisches Museum für Philologie* 93 (1950), 65–81 on the classical world (with reference to other full-scale studies of the theme, p. 66n4). Beside Paul Ristellhuber, *De Herus et Leandri historia heroica* (Strasbourg: Silbermann, 1863) see Joannes Klemm, *De fabulae quae est de Herus et Leandri amoribus fonte et auctore* (Leipzig: Hoffmann, 1889). A full recent study is that by Westphal, “Les eaux de la mer”, and see the (collaborative) anthology by Giovanni Cipriani, *Ero e Leandro: la mare d'amore. Antologia di passi latini, materiali iconografici ed elementi musicali* (Taranto: Mandese, 2006), as well as his “Miti di mare, miti d'amore: la fabula di Ero e Leandro in ‘multimedia’”, in: *Latina Didaxis* XXII (Genoa: Compagnia dei librai, 2007), 119–95. As examples of studies focused upon a specific area, see for Spanish Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo (1856–1912), *Antología de poetas líricos castellanos*, Tomo XIII (Madrid: Hernando, 1908), pp. 335–78 and Francesca Moya del Baño, *El tema de Hero y Leandro en la literatura española*, (Murcia: Universidad de Murcia, 1966), online at: [interclassica.um.es/investigacion/monografias/el_tema_de_hero_y_leandro_en_la_literatura_espanol/\(ver\)/1](http://interclassica.um.es/investigacion/monografias/el_tema_de_hero_y_leandro_en_la_literatura_espanol/(ver)/1). For German, see the standard reference work of Karl Goedeke, *Grundriss zur Geschichte der deutschen Dichtung aus den Quellen* (Dresden: Ehlermann, 1856-, recently Berlin: Akademie), VIII, 428f. Material may be found in the many early bibliographical reference works, and modern editions of individual texts usually discuss the theme in general terms, good examples being the introduction to the Italian edition of Musaios by Luciano Migotto, *Museo: Ero e Leandro* (Pordenone: Studio Tesi, 1992) and the Spanish translation by Antonio Ruiz de Elvira Prieto, *Museo: Hero y Leandro* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2003), with a good bibliography. There are, of course, now Wikipedia entries which can be useful as starting-points, under “Hero and Leander,” “Hero und Leander,” “Héro et Léandre,” “Hero y Leandro,” and in other languages as well. While informative, these can contain some inaccuracies; the German entry, which is extremely full, nevertheless has Bracciolini’s *Ero e Leandro* as a fable (it is a play), states that Amescua’s play is lost (it is not) and lists a supposed play by Alxinger (a translation of Musaios). Montiglio’s *Hero and Leander*, refers to the tale as myth in her title and legend in her subtitle; she indicates, p. 12, that

The history of the narrative of Hero and Leander may be approached from different angles. On the simplest level the handling and effect of the variable elements may be considered, the incremental development necessary, for example, to explain the reasons for the separation, why Leander attempted to swim in a storm, or to what extent Hero might be blamed for the tragedy. Examination of the precise nature of the love between the two, its beginnings and the psychological effects of the physical separation upon them is a further stage, and here elements of judgment may come in: is the love simply an irresistible (and perhaps fatal) natural force? Is it admirable, the tale providing a model of devotion even unto death? Or is it excessive, to be condemned as an avoidable indulgence? Characterization of the lovers as (gendered, active or passive) individuals expands this line of investigation, whether Leander is one of love's fools or slaves, famous not for having loved, but for having drowned. The integration of the narrative elements with an interpretation is demonstrated as early as the fifth/sixth century, when the fabulist and theologian (and later bishop) Fulgentius of Ruspe interpreted the story allegorically, seeing the lamp as the flame of young love which burns out quickly, for example, and interpreting the name Leander as implying dissolution, falling into lust.²⁶

That there is a clearly related, if varied, story noted in Japan at all might also indicate that there are further, perhaps not immediately identifiable, versions, probably as folk-tales, still to be found in other cultures, and there is scope for investigation amongst the many collections made especially in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It is likely that these will be reduced versions of the story, with the names lost or changed, and the tale possibly relocated, as in Lafcadio Hearn's example. There is a well-established Armenian folk-tale, for example, upon which a modern ballad has been based, where the story is localised, and the name of the Hero-figure is Tamar, and there may be other similar cases, especially perhaps in the east, disseminated from Byzantine Greece. Here, and also with the folk-ballad, we are dealing with what Walter Ong has called "secondary orality".²⁷ The relationship between the folk-tale and the ballad is of some complexity.

she does not distinguish between the terms, although she feels (correctly) that *legend* is more appropriate.

26 Färber, *Musaïos*, p. 70 includes Fulgentius's *Fabula Ero et Leandri*. His interpretation of the name of Leander is *solutio virorum*, which gives rise to love (we may consider the word "dissolute"). The interpretation recurs later. The Third Vatican Mythographer develops the allegory (Hero is equated with *amor*). See Montiglio, *Hero and Leander*, pp. 101–4; she feels that the etymology offered emasculates Leander.

27 V. Propp, *Morphology of the Folktale*, trans. Laurence Scott (Austin and London: University of Texas Press, rev. second ed. 1968) remains important, and Propp's patterns can be

Medieval versions retain the classical names and location for the most part, if not always accurately, and may even name Ovid. After the renaissance the direct association with Ovid or with Musaios and with the classical world is also frequently made clear, even to the extent of giving Musaios himself, or rather, his supposedly more ancient namesake, speaking parts in plays. On the other hand, the story can be dissociated from its classical origins and adapted to different circumstances, as in the transformation of the protagonists into a deacon and a nun. It may undergo a reduction to narrative essentials which involves the loss of the names and hence any classical resonance, and such reduction can sometimes lead also to a simplifying of the emotions and indeed to sentimentality. Whether the awareness of the classical origins of the story are retained by (any of) the readers is not clear in every case. On the other hand, the perceived ideals associated with the classical world can have their effect on the retelling of the story, something perhaps most clearly illustrated by Grillparzer's neo-classical drama. Even Pavić's far more recent and different novel assumes knowledge of the tale and uses the names in its sub-title and Musaios in the text. Perhaps it might send the reader to look up the original?

Formal variation and context offers a further level of investigation. The first appearance of the story in a work by a major writer is in Vergil's text on animal husbandry, and Ovid's *Heroides* presents us with a pair of poetical letters between the *separated* lovers, which demands acceptance that a letter may be delivered somehow even though the sea is too rough to swim. Musaios's epyllion and many of the later treatments are more conventional, extended versions with scope for augmentation and explanation. Some elements of the story can be exploited within identifiable literary constructs. It has been pointed out that Ovid already provides an early example of the topos of the departing lover's complaint at the coming of the dawn, the dawn-song, *aubade*, a

applied to an extent, even if it is perhaps not possible to establish a functional morphology. It has been noted that Hero's confinement in a tower may be linked with the Persian tale of Zal and Rudaba (the parents of Rustem), in Firdausi's *Shahnameh*, and indeed with the tale of Rapunzel; in both cases the lover manages to enter the tower. Stith Thompson's *Motif-Index of Folk Literature* (Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1955–58), v, 263, lists the Hero and Leander story under the heading "Sex" as T83 with a brief entry. The internet library www.zeno.org provides links to a large number of early collections from different cultures. On the complex issue of orality and the written text, see Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literacy. The Technologizing of the Word* (London and New York: Methuen, 1982, repr. Routledge, 2002). The Armenian folk-tale and the ballad based upon it are discussed in Chapter Five, below.

form with an extremely wide tradition.²⁸ The pop song 'Running Bear', referred to already, forms part of a sub-genre within the popular music of its period, that of the teenage tragedy song. Many more examples of the accommodation of the theme into specific cultural contexts could be adduced: courtly love, the questions of love in the French seventeenth century, even the interest in things Turkish in the eighteenth. Different genres may give greater or smaller emphasis to individual elements. Burlesque versions, naturally enough, regularly emphasise the sexual aspects, for example, whilst the conflict of love and duty is the stuff of tragedy.

The value of the story is in its variability. It can be a tragic human story of mankind against fate, of a love that is so intense that death is the only suitable outcome for complete unity; or a simple love-story susceptible even to sentimentalisation; or it can be a documentation or a celebration of youth and sexuality, susceptible also to parody. Stories customarily have a beginning and an end. In this case there is no established beginning, no fixed reason for the clandestine love and the swim to the tower. The end is clearer: the death of the central (sometimes the only) figures. The double death is, to be sure, on a few rare occasions avoided altogether, but far more regularly the narrative can go past the tragic ending, transforming the lovers into something in nature, or locating them in the Elysian fields, or extending their story for ever as a story, sometimes with an actual monument, sometimes explicitly through the telling of the story as such, as a model for other lovers, with the hope that their love might not have a tragic end.²⁹

28 See John Lockwood, "Classical, Later, and Medieval Latin" in: *Eos. An Enquiry into the Theme of Lovers' Meetings and Partings at Dawn in Poetry*, ed. Arthur T. Hatto (The Hague: Mouton, 1965), pp. 271–98. The volume covers more than fifty cultures.

29 See Don Fowler, "Second Thoughts on Closure" and Deborah H. Roberts, "Afterword: Ending and Aftermath, Ancient and Modern", in: *Classical Closure*, ed. Deborah H. Roberts, Francis M. Dunn and Don Fowler (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1997), pp. 3–22 and 251–73.

The Classical World

quam sequor, ipsa dea est



The first literary reflection of the story of Hero and Leander, in Vergil's third *Georgic*, gives neither the names of the lovers nor of the places, because, as Servius, a commentator in the fourth or fifth century, points out, the tale was well-known (*quia cognita erat fabula*). Vergil asks:

Quid iuvenis, magnum cui versat in ossibus ignem
durus amor? nempe abruptis turbata procellis
nocte natat caeca serus freta; quem super ingens
porta tonat caeli, et scopulis inlisa reclamant
aequora; nec miseri possunt revocare parentes
nec moritura super crudeli funere virgo.¹

(What of the young man, inflamed to the bone by cruel love, swimming late in the blind night across a stormy strait, while above him the great gate of heaven thunders and the waves dash loudly on the rocks — neither his wretched parents can call him back, nor the girl who is to die over his damaged corpse.)

The key elements are all there, the young lovers, the dangerous waters, the death of them both, and the force of love; but there is also a note of blame placed upon the young man in thrall to cruel (*durus*) love. The fire of love — burnt into his bones — is set against the wildness of the hostile waves. Vergil's picture of Leander's ardour is placed into the apparently unlikely context of animal breeding, in an agricultural poem in which the dangers of sexuality in animals are described. However, as Ovid and many others make clear, the story is indeed about sex. Vergil's allusion also indicates that the tale was familiar in

¹ *Georgics* III, 257–2, in Färber, *Musaios*, p. 32f. (with the commentary by Servius).

the early years of imperial Rome, and knowledge of it continues in Latin and Greek writings, with references by geographers (that by Strabo is contemporary with or possibly pre-dates Vergil), historians, theologians and poets. The story is alluded to in three places by Statius (late 1st century AD), including one in the *Thebaid*; in another place he has Leander swimming like a dolphin. The story appears in brief in several pieces in the *Greek Anthology*. Antipater of Thessalonica (1st century) provides an example chronologically close to Ovid, and there is a Homeric cento almost a millennium later summarising the tale. In later Latin, Ausonius in the fourth century (in two poems) and Sidonius Apollinaris in the fifth both allude to it. Statius and Sidonius even use the story in *epithalamia*.² Ovid, however, provides in the age of Augustus the first full-scale poetic version, and one of striking originality, while the Greek poem by Musaios Grammatikos a few centuries later adopts a different approach, which would become just as influential. Only a generation or so after Ovid, too, the Latin epigrammatist Martial, with whom it is appropriate to begin, devoted more than one of his poems to Leander, including one based on what seems to have been a marble relief, and this brief text is echoed in a great many later works.

- 2 Färber, *Musaïos*, includes the passages from Strabo, p. 30f., Statius, p. 64f. and the Greek examples, pp. 34f. (Antipater) and 72–4 (the Homeric cento of Leon Philosophos, 10th century). The two Latin poets are on p. 68f. Ausonius refers in his poem on the Moselle to the death of Helle and to that of Leander ('the young man from Abydos'), and in his 'Cupido Cruciator' to the girl from Sestos with a smoky lamp, who hurls herself from the tower; Sidonius (ca 430–479) alludes in his 'Epithalamium Ruricio' to the drowning of Hero (*Sestias*, 'the woman from Sestos'), in the sea, noting that she and other heroines would have loved the object of his poem, his friend Ruricius. The epigram ascribed to Luxorius (p. 72f.) focuses on Leander, as does that by Paulos Silentiarios (p. 70f.), both in the sixth century. Fulgentius has a nice comparison in prose between Hero, who mourned when her lamp was extinguished, and Psyche, who lost Cupid because the lamp was lit: see Färber, p. 68f. Färber also cites, p. 32f., the very brief allusion in a letter by Horace, with the commentary by Pomponius Porphyrio, and indeed lists material as late as the brief reference by Antonius Volsus in the fifteenth century (p. 84f.) See Montiglio, *Hero and Leander*, pp. 38–41 and 43–6 on Ausonius in particular, pp. 93, and pp. 177–83 on Antipater's epigram and other texts. For a survey of classical references, see Malten, "Motivgeschichtliche Untersuchungen". The early study by Ristelhuber, *De Herus et Leandri historia* includes a variety of geographical references, as does more recently Cipriani, *Ero e Leandro*. See in general Anne Bajard, "La légende de Léandre et Héro dans la littérature latine: du thème poétique à l'exploitation théâtrale", *Revue des Etudes Latines* 80 (2002), 150–61, and (on Ovid and Antipater), Thomas Gärtner, "Der Hellespont ist immer gefährlich für Frauen", *Würzburger Jahrbücher für die Altertumswissenschaft* 24 (2000), 167–71.

1 Martial

Martial (ca 40–ca 104 AD) concentrates upon Leander, and Hero is not named, although the reasons for his actions are assumed. There are two relevant pieces in his early *Liber Spectaculorum*, brief poems dealing with public spectacles in Rome. The first (xxv) refers in two lines (in the context of a staged sea-battle) to Leander's having swum successfully at night because *Caesaris unda fuit*, the wave belongs to Caesar. The lines relate more to Martial's desire for imperial patronage than to the story as such. The second piece (xxva), of four lines, seems not to belong in the same context, and it is, moreover, closely related to a separate two-line epigram apparently inspired by a marble relief of Leander in the waves. The four-line piece indicates that Leander is swimming to Hero:

Cum peteret dulces audax Leandros amores
et fessus tumidis iam premeretur aquis,
sic miser instantes adfatus dicitur undas
“Parcite dum propero, mergite cum redeo.”

(When bold Leander sought out his sweet love, and sank already exhausted in the swollen waters, he said wretchedly — so we are told — to the pressing waves: “Spare me while I am hurrying on, overwhelm me when I return.”)

That desperate plea to the waters is repeated in the terser epigram specifically linked with the marble image, the *Leandros marmoreus*; no reason is given this time, but the designation of ‘bold Leander’, *audax*, is retained:

Clamabat tumidis audax Leandros in undis:
“Mergite me fluctus, cum rediturus ero.”

(Bold Leander called out while in the swollen waves: “O flood, overwhelm me when I am on my way back”.)³

3 All three pieces are in Färber, *Musaïos*, p. 66f. The sentiment echoes Ovid's *Leander Heroni* 120 in the *Heroides*. See also the edition and translation by Walter C. Ker, *Martial: Epigrams* for the Loeb library (London: Heinemann, 1919–20), I, 18f. for the poems on the spectacles (with note on p. 19 on the status of xxva), and II, 502f. for epigram clxxxi in Book XIV. In early editions the ordering of the books of epigrams varies; what is now taken as book XIV has the heading *Apophoreta*. Karl Lehmann saw the group of epigrams including that on the marble Leander as the reflection of an actual collection of art works: “A Roman Poet Visits a

The longer piece has the telling insert *dicitur*, 'it is said, reported', placing the story firmly in the past, and indicating that the words that Martial puts into Leander's mouth are part of a tradition. *Adfatus* is often used of the last words of the dying. Concentration is entirely upon the bold but potentially fatal act of swimming, with the awareness (on his part as on ours) that he will perish expressed in the form of a request to the already swollen (*tumidus* in both versions) waves to wait until he is on his way back before swallowing him up. Leander sinks exhausted in the longer piece, but in the briefer epigram it is not even clear that he *does* die. Like the carving on which the shorter poem is based, this is a scene from the story as it is happening. Leander is not certain that he is going to drown, and nor are we. It is, however, firmly in the tradition that Leander does drown on the way to his love, not on the return, and divergences from this are rare. The epigrams are usually interpreted as the character's thoughts on his final journey. Leander's plea to the waves is echoed in a range of later contexts, and Martial joins Ovid and Musaios in shaping the tradition. The tone of the plea is left to the interpreter, however, and it can be presented as pathos or as defiance.

2 Ovid, *The Heroides*

The first full treatment of what he was able to assume was a familiar story is by Ovid (43 BC–17 AD), and given that the tale involves the act of swimming by Leander, his death in a storm and the suicide of Hero, its most notable feature is that Ovid shows us nothing of any of this directly. His starting-point is a situation where Leander is precisely *unable* to swim the Hellespont, so that he and Hero must exchange letters, in which much of the familiar story is either remembered (what has already happened), or adumbrated (how it will end). Although he referred to the tale in other writings, Ovid's full version is found in the collection of poems in elegiac couplets (a hexameter followed by a pentameter) known as the *Heroides*, more strictly the *Epistolae* or *Epistulae Heroidum*, letters of the heroines.⁴ Ovid exploits the idea of separated lovers by

Museum", *Hesperia* 14 (1945), 259–69, see p. 265. See also Kathleen M. Coleman, *Martial: Liber Spectaculorum* (Oxford: OUP, 2006), p. 209.

4 For Ovid's other references, see Färber, *Musaios*, p. 62 and Montiglio, *Hero and Leander*, p. 19f. The text of the two *Heroides* letters is in Färber, *Musaios*, pp. 34–63 with a German verse translation by W. Gerlach; text with English prose translation in the Loeb collection, *Ovid: Heroides and Amores*, ed., transl. Grant Showerman (London: Heinemann, 1914), pp. 245–74 (revised edition by G. P. Goold, 1977). A standard text-edition is that by Heinrich Dörrie, *P. Ovidii Nasonis Epistulae Heroidum* (Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, 1971), and the

taking famous women in classical tales and imagining their correspondence in the form of twenty-one poems mostly of between 100 and 200 lines. The first fifteen are from women only, and the last of these, from Sappho to Phaon, has a questionable textual history, although that story is occasionally linked with that of Hero and Leander. The last six are pairs of letters between required, if still in different ways star-crossed lovers: Helen of Troy and Paris, Hero and Leander (letters xviii and xix), and the rather less well-known Acontius and Cydippe. There has been and is much debate (which goes back to classical times) as to whether the paired letters belong with the rest, or indeed are by Ovid at all. There is a case for taking the paired letters as a separate second part of the collection but denying Ovid's authorship is harder to justify, even if recent editions have nevertheless continued to waver on the question of authenticity.⁵ Textual criticism of Ovid lies well beyond the scope of the present study, but it is instructive to set against the blunt comment by Ulrich von Wilamowitz-Moellendorff in 1914 that "an die Echtheit der Briefe mit Antwort werde ich nie glauben" (I shall never believe that the letters with responses are genuine), that by another classicist, Edward Kennard Rand, just over a decade later: "It is strange that the genuineness of these poems was debated so long; if they are not from Ovid's pen, an *ignotus* has beaten him at his own

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- first major modern text and commentary was that edited by Arthur Palmer, *P. Ovidi Nasonis Heroïdes, with the Greek Translation of Planudes*, completed by Louis C. Purser, new ed. by Duncan F. Kennedy ([1898] Bristol: Phoenix, 2005). There are plenty of modern translations into English, including the extremely well-annotated literal prose translation by Henry T. Riley for the Bohn Classical Library, *The Heroïdes ... of Ovid* (London: Bohn, 1852), pp. 193–219, with a great deal on Byron. Harold C. Cannon, *Ovid's Heroïdes* (New York: Dutton, 1971), pp. 128–42 uses pentameter rhymed couplets to imitate the closed nature of the Latin elegiacs, and rhyme is used also by Daryl Hine, *Ovid's Heroïnes* (Hew Haven: Yale UP, 1991). Harold Isbell uses unrhymed couplets, *Heroïdes* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1990). There are many translations into other languages.
- 5 See the instructive review by Peter E. Knox in *Gnomon* 72 (2000), 405–8 of Marcus Beck, *Die Epistulae Heroïdum XVII und XIX des Corpus Ovidianum. Einheitskritische Untersuchungen* (Paderborn: Schöningh, 1996). Knox contrasts Beck's skepticism with the positive affirmation by Gianpiero Rosati, *P. Ovidi Nasionis Heroïdum Epistulae XVIII–XIX* (Florence: Biblioteca Nazionale, 1996) and the cautious acceptance in the commentary by E. J. Kenney on the paired epistles, *Ovid. Heroïdes XVI–XXI* (Cambridge: CUP, 1996). Knox comments wryly on the appearance of three texts and commentaries in the same year. Kenney stresses the 'trip-tych' of the Hero and Leander story between the ironic tales of Paris and Helen and Acontius and Cydippe. A question-mark above the paired epistles is also placed by E. Courtney, "Ovidian and Non-Ovidian *Heroïdes*", *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies* 12 (1965), 63–6 and "*Echtheitskritik*: Ovidian and Non-Ovidian *Heroïdes* Again", *Classical Journal* 93 (1997–8), 157–66, also referring to the three editions. Courtney refers to "the imitator" and neither he nor Beck seem to dispute the quality of the paired epistles.

game”.⁶ Those between Leander and Hero stand out even in comparison with the single letters.

In all the letters Ovid assumes knowledge of the stories involved and gives us a range of emotions from women who are distraught, deserted, angry, jealous, suicidal, patient, or simply smitten. Penelope's husband Ulysses has been on his travels for years, and she waits for him in an agony of suspense; other letter-writers have been abandoned, such as Phyllis, Ariadne, Sappho, and most famous of all, Dido; two separate ladies write to Jason. The *Heroides* offer explorations of the state of mind of each of the letter-writers, wavering at times, lighter at others, but above all demonstrating the depth of feeling of the mainly female writers. Rand wished, indeed, to “remove the *Heroides* from the realms of tragedy to that of psychology”.⁷

The exchange between Hero and Leander has been praised for its dramatic quality, and indeed, like the other paired letters, it shows both sides of an emotional situation, permitting us to see into the thoughts of the couple quite separately. Ovid was aware that his readers would be familiar with the tragedy, but that is not what he gives us. The letters are less a direct dialogue than two parallel monologues, although Hero does refer and respond to Leander's letter and hopes that hers will please him, while we may wonder if he would ever

6 Wilamowitz is cited by Walter Kraus, “Die Briefpaare in Ovids *Heroiden*”, originally in *Wiener Studien* 65 (1950–1), 54–77 and in *Ovid*, ed. Michael von Albrecht and Ernst Zinn (Darmstadt: WBG, 1982), pp. 269–94 (see p. 271). Rand's comment is in his *Ovid and his Influence* ([1925] New York: Cooper Square, 1963), p. 27. There is a discussion of the issue in R. Alden Smith, “Myth, and Love Letters: Text and Tale in Ovid's *Heroides*”, in: *Oxford Readings in Ovid*, ed. Peter E. Knox (Oxford: OUP, 2006), pp. 217–37.

7 *Ovid and his Influence*, p. 26. It need hardly be said that there is an enormous and ongoing amount of secondary literature on Ovid and on the *Heroides* in particular, though not all consider the double letters, as for example Laurel Fulkerson, *The Ovidian Heroine as Author: Reading, Writing and Community in the Heroides* (Cambridge: CUP, 2005), which has a good bibliography. One recent reviewer even speaks of an ‘Ovid-boom’, and selected studies worthy of special mention include: Florence Verducci, *Ovid's Toyshop of the Heart* (Princeton: PUP, 1985) stressing the wit in the letters; Linda S. Kauffman, *Discourses of Desire. Gender, Genre, and Epistolary Fictions* (Ithaca and London: Cornell UP, 1986), who stresses in her chapter on the *Heroides*, pp. 29–61, the experimental nature of the work; Herman Fränkel, *Ovid: A Poet Between Two Worlds* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: U. California Press, 1969); and the more specialised work by Marina Scordelis Brownlee, *The Severed Word: Ovid's 'Heroides' and the Novela Sentimental* (Princeton: PUP, 1990) on the epistolary form. On Ovid's wit, see the large volume (originally a dissertation) by Jean-Marc Frécaut, *L'Esprit et l'humour chez Ovide* (Grenoble: Presses Universitaires, 1972). On the double epistles, see Cornelia M. Hintermeier, *Die Briefpaare in Ovids Heroides. Tradition und Innovation* (Stuttgart: Steiner, 1993); Hintermeier stresses the dramatic aspects and also considers the language of male desire. See also Katharina Volk, “Hero und Leander in Ovids Doppelbriefen (epist. 18 und 19)”, *Gymnasium* 103 (1996), 95–108 and the analysis in Montiglio, *Hero and Leander*, pp. 22–37.

read it. Ovid's rationalisation of a situation in which they can send letters but Leander cannot cross to Hero is slightly contrived, but it also provides some explanation of what, apart from the Hellespont itself, makes things so difficult. Leander finds the one sailor who will brave the storm to take the letter but cannot go himself because he would be seen. In her letter Hero hints at other obstacles.

The letters differ in tone, but all the time we are aware of the inherent paradoxes, namely that love-letters are private expressions directed at a single reader, while these are made available to an audience, and one which is, what is more, aware of the outcome. That audience will respond appropriately when Ovid lets the letter-writers foreshadow as dreams or as anxieties what is going to happen in their future. The letters are clearly gender-distinct. Leander's letter is that of a young man — he uses the word *iuvenis* of himself — and he talks more than once to Hero (and to us) about stripping off his clothes ready to swim. Chafing at being unable to swim to her, he expresses his frustration about the weather and recalls earlier happy meetings, sometimes in a straightforward manner, sometimes with rhetorical parallels. He invokes other familiar stories (not always appropriate ones), and apostrophizes gods, goddesses, and nature itself, in a manner which is sometimes lyrically impressive, but sometimes self-conscious and comically clumsy, as if he is trying too hard. The gods, although addressed, do not play a direct part except as forces of nature. Even though Leander looks back on amorous encounters with Hero, no indication is given of the beginnings of the love between them, details of which seem not to be a fixed part of the story.

Where Leander is fairly single-minded in his erotic thoughts and pride in his own athleticism, Hero is more self-reflective; her thoughts swing wildly as she demands that he try to come, imagines reasons why he might not wish to make the attempt, and then fears that he might after all try to do so and could then perish. Both letters refer to Phrixos and the unfortunate Helle, whose death gives the strait its name. It might be noted, finally, that a third character is referred to by both lovers, Hero's old nurse, whose role is minor but not negligible.

Leander's letter comes first in the sequence, presenting us with the urgency of his love, but explaining both why he cannot cross the Hellespont, and how the letter is to reach her. The stormy conditions, and the unkindness of the gods, are shown to the reader initially through Hero's eyes, when Leander tells her she can see for herself the pitch-black skies and wind-whipped sea (*"Ipse videt caelum pice nigrius et freta ventis/ turbida"*, 7f.). The sea is dangerous, but one brave sailor will deliver the letter. It is, however, not just the stormy

sea that prevents Leander himself from attempting to cross with that single ship. All of Abydos is on the watchtowers looking down at the harbour: “in speculis omnis Abydos erat” (12), and Leander adds that he would not have been able to conceal the love from his parents. The parental and social pressure is not elaborated, but the pair, we gather, wish to continue to hide their love, ‘as before’ (*velut ante*, 13). Indeed, not until Hero’s own letter do things become a little (if not much) clearer, when she speculates on whether a Thracian girl might be deemed unworthy for someone from Abydos (“inpar/ dicar Abydeno Thressa puella”, xix, 99f.).

Leander now becomes rhetorical: his right hand, which wrote the letter, would be better employed swimming, but after this extended comparison he moves to more straightforward description. His letter, overall far less internalised than that of Hero, switches between pure narrative and rhetorical passages. The sea has raged for the past week, he cannot sleep, he either sees or imagines he sees the light from her tower, and he has three times stripped naked and attempted to set off, only to be defeated by the waves. References to his stripping recur in both letters, perhaps underlined here by the way he imagines Hero opening the fastenings of the letter.

Rhetorical again, Leander turns on Boreas, the north wind, effectively asking him how he would like it — *Quid faceres?* (40) ‘what would *you* do?’⁸ — and telling him that he is thwarting love, an emotion that Boreas must himself have felt when he carried off Oreithyia. The allusion (which crops up occasionally in later versions) is not explained here, and is followed by another elliptic reference to Aeolos, the wind-god. The rhetorical section is completed by a desire on Leander’s part for the wings of Daedalus, although the very naming of Icarus must make the whole allusion ironic even to the modern reader.

A new section opens very formally with the word *interea* (53) ‘meanwhile’, and allows Leander to recall for himself, for Hero, and for the reader, the erotic course of their love so far. Leander tells us how he had left his father’s house (reminding us of the prohibition and of his youth, subordinated still to his father), threw off (with a nice zeugma) his fear with his clothes, and had prayed to the moon-goddess, Diana (here designated Cynthia), who had shone on other lovers. An extravagant lyrical passage expresses Leander’s feelings for Hero. Just as the stars give way to the moon’s radiance, so is his own goddess, Hero, more beautiful than all other beauties, and if Diana doubts it, then she is blind. Ovid, who has already allowed Leander to say that Diana/Cynthia should see for herself — *ipsa vide!* (70) — plays with the language here:

8 Kraus, “Briefpaare”, p. 286f. points to the comic aspects.

tanto formosis formosior omnibus illa est:
si dubitas, caecum, Cynthia, lumen habes. (73f.)

(she is so much more beautiful than all the beautiful ones/ and if you doubt that, Cynthia, your own light is blind.)

This declaration, which Leander is recalling having once made to the moon-goddess, is reported within the epistolary fictionality to the outer audience, and in the fictive present to Hero herself, so that it becomes a direct declaration of his love. It also places Hero on an equal footing with the apostrophized goddess in the much-cited and imitated line: “quam sequor, ipsa dea est” (66, the one I follow is herself a goddess). But the opening of the next paragraph (as it were) of the letter takes the edge off it all and gives us a nice insight into Leander himself. After the poetically remarkable and beautifully constructed apostrophe to the moon-goddess about Hero which he has just recalled and quoted for us, Leander admits that if that isn’t *exactly* what he said, then it was certainly something along those lines: “Haec ego, vel certe non his diversa, locutus/ per mihi” (75f. Having said that to myself, or undoubtedly something pretty much like it ...).

Now he continues with a more direct account of how he set off towards his first sexual encounter with Hero. That time the sea was calm, the waves moonlit. He recalls the tale of Keyx and Alkyone, another not very appropriate tragic tale in which one lover drowns and the other commits suicide, and they are turned into kingfishers (halcyons), but then more realistically remembers how his arms began to ache, but he was given heart when he sees her light from afar (*procul aspexi lumen*, 85; images of light and flame recur throughout the text).⁹ He reaches the shore and is received by Hero, who has to be prevented by her nurse (here mentioned for the first time) from plunging into the sea, a prophetic irony for those who know the story. Hero takes off some of her own clothes to put round his shoulders and dries his hair, and Leander’s erotic memories are rounded off with a series of rhetorical topoi, starting with an evasion formula not unlike one which Hero will use herself:

Cetera nox et nos et turre conscia novit
quodque mihi lumen per vada monstrat iter. (105f.)

9 Peter Dronke, *Medieval Latin and the Rise of European Love-Lyric* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1985f.), I, 167 links Leander’s comment that when Hero can watch him he gains extra strength (93f.) with the later courtly love tradition.

(The rest is known only to the night, to us and to the co-conspirator, the tower/ and the light that showed me the way across the waves.)

In a slightly unusual variation on the innumerability topos, their joys, we hear, were more numerous than seaweed (*alga*) in the Hellespont, and the passage is rounded off with another rhetorical flourish — the shorter the time they had, the more they tried to make it worthwhile.

After too short a night the lovers had to part, Leander continues, telling how he plunged into the *virginis aequor* (117), the sea in which the virgin Helle drowned, though Hero presumably no longer is a virgin herself. His description again has some ironies, since he describes himself as a shipwrecked man on his return, where he had been a swimmer on the way. The sea had seemed to run downhill as he swam to Hero and uphill on his return. The concept anticipates Martial and others.

Now, however, Leander becomes logical, wondering why they cannot be in the same place, since Sestos would be as good as Abydos: “tam tua terra mihi, quam tibi nostra placet” (128, your country pleases me as much as mine does you). The pragmatic point is picked up by Hero, and it is surprising that it is rarely considered in later versions. Leander returns to the present to complain again of the foaming sea, and invokes Helle once more, and Ovid even allows Leander to remind us directly of the ill-fame of the place, which took its name *de virgine ... mersa* (139), from the drowned virgin. Still wishing to be able to swim, Leander enumerates the constellations, but declares that he, although sailor, ship and passenger all at the same time (*navigium, navita, vector*, 148), will not be guided by these stars, but by *aliud lumen* (155), another light. This may be either Hero herself and his love for her, or the lamp, which (as he later urges her) she is to hold out for him. Meanwhile his anguish at the separation and his feelings of passion seem to grow as he considers how things may change when different constellations are in the sky, working himself up to a resolve to come as soon as possible.

Leander's reflections show his state of mind to the knowing audience. An attempt could mean his death, he says, but boldness (*audacia*, a key concept with him) could also result in happiness:

Aut mihi continget felix audacia salvo
aut mors solliciti finis amoris erit. (195f.)

(Either my boldness will give happy success/ or death will be the end of my anxious love.)

The idea of death leads him to a startlingly accusatory conclusion, however:

Flebis enim tactuque meum dignabere corpus
et 'mortis' dices 'huic ego causa fui.' (199f.)

(You will honour my corpse with tears and touching,/ and say 'I was the cause of this death.')

This directness on Leander's part is realistic, and if the audience is aware of the omen, Ovid reminds us now that the actual reader of the letter is Hero by having Leander apologize if this *is* an omen (201: the word is used) which might distress her. He immediately says that he will say no more along those lines. Instead he wishes for a calm sea so that his ship can rest with her in its most suitable harbour, after which the storm and her arms can keep him there; the symbolism hardly requires elucidation. After this increasingly intense build-up of erotic expectation he declares openly that he will swim as soon as he can, urging her to keep the light always visible ("lumen in adspectu tu modo semper habe!" 216).

Hero's letter is different in tone, although her character emerges just as believably. If he is athletic, young and impetuous, her love for him is just as complete and her expression as youthfully erotic. Where Leander is fretful at being detained, her anxieties are more varied, and she writes with far less studied rhetoric than does the schooled, well-born male. Ovid's abilities to imagine the female mind and indeed sexuality have been commented upon often enough, and those skills are apparent here. Her letter is a direct response to his, and we read it on its own terms. But it also completes allusively the saga known already to the audience. We may wonder precisely when she received Leander's letter, and whether she wrote her own when he was already on his way to her, so that he might never have read hers.

Its opening couplet demands very simply that he come: *veni!* She, too, is burning with love and she shares the impatient erotic passion: *urimur igne pari* (5), we are burning up with the same fire. A new note is struck, however, when Hero begins to wonder how Leander is occupying himself when he is away from her. As an aristocratic young man, he has a whole range of possible, indeed prescribed, pursuits — hunting, fishing, bird-snaring, arguing cases, riding, drinking, all unavailable to her as a woman. Conversely, nothing is left for her to do but love: *superest praeter amare nihil* (16). She wonders the whole time why he is not coming, talks about it to her old nurse, curses the waves, and when they calm a little, suddenly wonders whether Leander can, but perhaps does not want to come: *posse quidem, sed te nolle venire* (24).

Although the old nurse dries Hero's eyes, the agitation is intensified for Leander and for us as Hero tells how she searches the sand for Leander's footprints, aware of the futility of this, and kisses the clothes he takes off when he swims back. She tells us how she sets the lamp at night at the top of the tower and then returns to her spinning, which is all that women have left to do (38). The nurse is quizzed constantly about whether she thinks Leander may have set out, or whether he is still too worried about his own people watching him, or whether — a regular preoccupation, and a picture Hero clearly enjoys — he has just cast off his clothes and oiled his limbs. The nurse appears to nod assent, but she is in fact nodding off: "sed movet obrepens somnus anile caput" (46, sleep, creeping up, was what moved her aged head). The picture is realistic, with age less than stimulated by the obsessive passion of the young, but the scene might for the outer audience also foreshadow an occasion when the nurse or even Hero herself, may fall asleep and fail to guard the lamp. Hero is left with her thoughts, and she imagines, somewhat feverishly, that Leander may be on his way, then, falling asleep after her long watch, gives herself up to erotic dreams, the details of which modesty will not allow her to mention (at least not *in extenso*), even in a (fictive) personal letter to her lover:

Nam modo te videor prope iam spectare natantem
 bracchia nunc umeris umida ferre meis:
 nunc dare, quae soleo, madidis velamina membris,
 pectora nunc nostro iuncta fovere sinu,
 multaque praeterea linguae reticenda modestae
 quae fecisse iuvat, facta referre pudet.
 Me miseram! brevis est haec et non vera voluptas,
 Nam tu cum somno semper abire soles. (59–66)

(It is as if I see you swimming closer to me, then putting your wet arm around my shoulders as I place, as usual, a garment over your wet limbs, and we warm each other, breast pressed against breast, and much more — which cannot be mentioned by a modest tongue, and shame will not let me say what is done. Miserable wretch that I am! This amorous delight is brief and not even real. You always vanish when sleep leaves me.)

Leander was more direct, cutting off actual memory with his evasion formula. Hero's eroticism is at another remove of delicacy, since it is a reported dream, but it is underscored by the same conceit of unmentioned details. Hero is reminding herself and Leander of the delights they have shared and telling the audience that this is a fully consummated love. Yet the key is still that

me miseram! The dream of amorous delight (*voluptas*) is brief and it is not even real.¹⁰

Hero's thoughts now revert to why Leander has not tried to swim. His letter had rhetorical flourishes, but Hero's is direct. Why did he miss chances? He might equally well have been detained in Sestos as in Abydos (a point he does make). This line of thought intensifies as Hero begins even to question his boldness: "Unde novus timor hic, quoque illa audacia fugit" (89, why this new fear? Where did your old boldness run off to?); *audacia* (used adjectivally in Martial) is a key characteristic of his. Hero wavers between urging him to come and fearing for his safety, but then in another twist begins to wonder about his love: "Non ego tam ventos timeo mea vota morantes, / quam similis vento ne tuus erret amor" (95f. I do not fear the winds, which are delaying my wishes, as much as the thought that your love, like the wind, may turn).

With this, she moves swiftly through a whole range of disturbing thoughts and new fears. One, already mentioned, is that she may be thought inferior as a Thracian, but she then speculates on the possibility of a rival (using the word *paelex*, usually a mistress or concubine), and worrying, again in a poetically memorable line, that a new love might make an end of their love ("fitque novus nostri finis amoris amor" 104). The suspicion is easily understood; Penelope also worries about whether Ulysses has found some foreign woman in the first of the *Heroides* (75–80), and so does Phyllis about Demophoön in the second (103). Hero's lover is not as distant as theirs, however, and she realises that this is all imagining. Leander has given no cause for these fears, and this leads her to summarise the nature of love: after all, who has ever loved completely free of worry ("quis enim securus amavit?" 109). Leander links love with danger, Hero with insecurity.

Having worked through that line of thought and ended with self-awareness, she now returns to her wish that he might come: *O! utinam venias* (115, if only you would come!). She reiterates the hope that only the storm or his father are stopping him, and not the imagined rival, who is clearly stubbornly refusing to leave her thoughts. She recalls Helle and as Leander had done with Boreas, reminds the sea-god Neptune of *his* loves, a whole list of them, adding that there were others that she has read about; it is a nice internal point that she refers in a poem to the poets who wrote about Neptune. She also tells Neptune that he may attack ships or whole fleets, but not a single swimmer.¹¹

10 The 'Sang on Absence' attributed to King James I of Scotland (1394–1437) may echo Ovid. "O dreame maist sueit, if it war not a lie!" *Scottish Love Poems*, ed. Antonia Fraser (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976), p. 50.

11 It has been pointed out that the comment in v. 148 that Leander is not kindred with Ulysses — to whom Neptune was antagonistic — indicates that Ovid's version takes place after the Trojan war. In a later French text Leander writes his letter *from* Troy.

As the lamp beside which she is writing (151) splutters, Hero urges Leander once more with inviting eroticism to brave the waves; her limbs are stretched out in the middle of her bed. Once again (and with a slightly different irony) the myth of Phrixos and Helle is mentioned, Hero claiming that *he* crossed safely. A further and quite different fantasy now crosses her mind: that she too should swim and that they might kiss at the midway point and then return.

She changes again, however, to warn him to be careful. *Me miseram!* she repeats, O wretched me, *cupio non persuadere, quod hortor* (187, I do not wish to persuade you to do what I am urging). This encapsulates her conflict of mind:¹² she wants him to come and yet cannot persuade him to do so because of the dangers. When she looks at the sea a cold fear touches her heart (193) and she records another very different dream which she has just had, adding that she has already sacrificed against the omens. She dreamt of a dolphin thrown dying onto the shore. Ovid does not let her dream of Leander's death, but of a sea-creature, an indirect image which could be interpreted in different ways (*quidquid id es*, she says, 204, whatever that is about,), but which frightens her. The audience is well able to make the link with Leander cast up on the shore, and the dream and the dolphin will be much used and varied in subsequent versions of the tale. The elliptic dream does not contain her own suicide, but she has said before that she would die without Leander, and she says it again now: "numquam nisi te sospite sospes ero" (205, only if you are safe can I be). Her final actual advice is: "nec nisi tranquillo bracchia crede mari!" (204, Do not trust your arms to the sea unless it is calm.)

Ovid's conceit is a bold one. Unlike the first fifteen letters, we are given a balance of the masculine and feminine protagonists, presenting them as different in mind and form of expression, but also as equally young, passionate and impetuous.¹³ Leander is a well-born and educated young man, still apparently subject to his father and to the possible opprobrium of his people. He argues in court, hunts and rides, and engages in proper masculine activities. He is rhetorically trained, though not yet very practised at it: his use of somewhat overblown rhetoric and classical allusions is believable, and he has presumably been taught the way to write. He is moderately well versed in ancient stories, although those he adduces are not always entirely appropriate, since he seems unable to spot ominous parallels. What comes out in his letter, too, is a delight in his own naked physicality, his athletic prowess and masculinity, and his eroticism as he recalls their encounters. He is proud of his abilities as

12 Kraus, "Briefpaare", p. 288f. discusses the contrast between *amare* and *bene velle*, and the notion that danger enhances love as expressed in Ovid's *Ars Amatoria*.

13 A psychological reading of the essentially social distinctions between men and women voiced in Ovid by Hero herself is developed in Schwarz, *Psychology of Sex*, p. 172.

a swimmer and of his fine physique as he strips off and oils his body. Dare one say that he is, while good-looking and athletic, somewhat less of a thinker? He has no confiding friend, as Hero has her nurse, but he is himself completely self-confident, sure of her love and his strength. He loves Hero completely and is obsessed by her, comparing her with a goddess in elegant (at least, as far as he recalls) terms, but there is sexual fulfilment, even if evasion-formulas draw a thin veil over the details. Hero's thoughts expressed in her letter are consistently and consciously feminine as she underlines the gender-roles assigned to them by society: Leander can do all sorts of things, she must sit and spin. But she is also young, and she is completely preoccupied with her love for the young man. The response of the old nurse is a nice contrastive touch, apparently nodding agreement with Hero, but in fact dozing off because Hero patently has only one topic of conversation.

Leander recalls for himself, for Hero, and for the audience the first of their clandestine meetings, but not how they first met, which becomes a major element in later versions. Hero tells him (and us) of her erotic dreams, which are relished but unsatisfactory, and which indicate that she is thinking of their love both awake and asleep. The delicacy that prevents her from giving all the details even to him contrasts with his more direct eroticism. Hero has more time to think, and her thoughts, like her incessant talk to the nurse, are entirely about Leander. Their ever-changing focus — crossness, fear of a rival, fear that his love is lessened, knowingly unreasonable behaviour such as searching for his footprint, then fear for his life as she desires his presence — typify her letter.

There are repeated motifs with clear symbolic values: fire, the light of the lamp (tended, but spluttering) and of the stars, the raging of the winds and waves (which imitate the overwhelming force of love, but in this case impede Leander's passion). More basic are the repeated references to Leander's (discarded) clothes. Other love-stories involving the gods are mentioned, and in addition the (ultimately tragic) tale of Phrixos and Helle is invoked by both. But overall this is a daring presentation of a known story by not actually telling it, and yet allowing the main characters to indicate what will happen. Since we are placed in the middle of the relationship as it is going on, the work is not about tragedy, fate, or the gods; it is about sex. Gilbert Highet rightly said of Ovid's poems in his lively survey of the Latin classics that "their chief subject, almost their sole subject, is heterosexual gratification", reinforced by an "acute knowledge of women's psychology".¹⁴ Keeping the pair separate also allows Ovid to point up the social-educational and psychological differences between them: Leander's single-minded bold ardour is set against her rapid alternations

14 Gilbert Highet, *Poets in a Landscape* ([1957] Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1959), p. 175f.

of desire, jealousy and fears for his life. Both are sexually motivated, but Hero understands more fully some, at least, of the implications of love.

This is the tragedy of Hero and Leander told without the finality of the tragedy. Ovid shows us youth and passion, and who could doubt that when the skies clear a little Leander will swim, even though the reader knows the ultimate outcome. What the reader does not know is *when*, and Ovid's immediacy keeps open the possibility, which is so important to the nature of the narrative, that Leander *might* survive. Ovid leaves open a new set of questions by siting his version of the tale in its living centre. Perhaps Leander has indeed already begun his swim, perhaps he will die, perhaps he never will read her letter. Despite Hero's propitiatory sacrifices, that dolphin-dream really is prophetic; and yet they are still enjoying their love, and while they are safely separate, they will remain joined forever in the moment, not (yet) in death, but in the poetry. It is curious in some respects to realise that this original, indeed (as critics have pointed out) experimental, version stands at the *beginning* of a very extensive literary tradition, but the answer to this lies in the assumption of familiarity that Ovid was able to make.

3 Musaïos

The tale of Hero and Leander is presumed from its setting to be Greek in origin, and this is sometimes even claimed in later versions. We do not, however, have a particularly early Greek text. A small fragment of a Greek poetic version survives in a manuscript (Papyrus 486, 1st century AD) in the John Rylands Library in Manchester. This seems to be a monologue by Hero asking that Leander should come quickly to her and expresses her complete devotion. A further Greek fragment from Oxyrhynchus in Egypt (3rd century AD), may or may not reflect the story.¹⁵ There is, however, a full version in a Greek poem by Musaïos from around the end of the fifth century.

Musaïos the Grammarian is known exclusively as the author of the poem *Ta kath' Hero kai Leandron*, On Hero and Leander, which is usually described as an epyllion, a brief verse retelling of a single story, often a tragic love-tale. From allusions to the poem and a possible identification with the recipient

15 The John Rylands papyrus is discussed by Malten, "Motivgeschichtliche Untersuchungen", pp. 66–8 (with text and translation) and it is also in Färber, *Musaïos*, p. 30f. Färber also includes the more dubious material — there are no names to confirm the connection — from Oxyrhynchus on p. 90f., and Malten discusses it in detail, p. 68f. See also Montiglio, *Hero and Leander*, p. 12f.

of two letters from Prokopios of Gaza (ca 475–ca 538), Musaios seems to have lived and worked in the late fifth or early sixth century, possibly in Egypt. The style of the epyllion is episodic, and the Egyptian school with which the work is associated was notably florid in its expression, although Musaios is not extreme in this respect. Musaios seems to have known some Christian poetry.¹⁶ Where Ovid's version was known in the West during the middle ages, the work of Musaios, although it remained known in the east, was only rediscovered in Western Europe in the renaissance. Manuscripts (with scholia) dating from the tenth or eleventh centuries are noted in Italy from 1464, and the work was printed not long after this by Aldus Manutius (Aldo Manuzio) in Venice in 1494, in Greek and Latin.¹⁷

Ovid's oblique retelling of the story occupies 438 lines, Musaios's more direct version has 343.¹⁸ These two influential literary presentations are

- 16 On the form see M. Marjorie Crump, *The Epyllion from Theocritus to Ovid* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1931, repr. Bristol: Classical Press, 1987). See Färber, *Musaios*, p. 95f. for succinct and clear comments on the form and style, and pp. 93–6 on the letters of Prokopios and another possible reference. Gianfranco Agosti, "Greek Poetry", in: *The Oxford Handbook of Late Antiquity*, ed. Scott Fitzgerald Johnson (Oxford: OUP, 2012), pp. 361–404, notes p. 369 Musaios's citation of Christian writers.
- 17 It was printed at the same time by J. Laskaris in Florence, and over the next century-and-a-half came printings in Paris (1507), Cologne (1517) and Antwerp (1575). See R. R. Bolgar, *The Classical Heritage and its Beneficiaries* (Cambridge: CUP, 1963), pp. 501 and 516f. Färber, *Musaios*, p. 99 also lists some later printings (Frankfurt, 1627; London, 1737). Ristellhuber, *De Herus et Leandri historia*, p. 62 discusses Musaios and his early translators, and there is an important modern source by Paolo Eleuteri on Musaios in vol. x of the *Catalogus Translationum et Commentationum* series started by Paul Kristeller (Turnhout: Brepols, 2015), pp. 165–238 (online). Eleuteri points, p. 168, to a possible allusion to Musaios in the *Rape of Helen* by the contemporary poet Colluthus, from Egypt, a work referred to by Alan Cameron in the 1970 *Oxford Classical Dictionary* as being "in uninspired hexameters, clearly influenced by Nonnus". Nonnus of Panopolis may also have influenced Musaios. See also Montiglio, *Hero and Leander*, p. 178f., who refers to Musaios's work as "instantly influential".
- 18 The Greek text is presented (with a German translation and notes) in Färber, *Musaios*, pp. 6–27, and is used here. There is a text and English translation in the Loeb Library 421: *Aetia, Iambi, Hecale and Other Fragments. Hero and Leander. Callimachus. Musaeus*, ed., trans. C. A. Trypanis, T. Gelzer and Cedric H. Whitman (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1973). Gelzer and Whitman respectively edit and translate Musaios: see pp. 291–343. There is a modern English translation by R. D. Blackmore, the author of *Lorna Doone*, published in 1855, and others by Edwin Arnold, *Hero and Leander. From the Greek of Musaeus* (London: Cassell, 1873) and by E. E. Sikes, *Hero and Leander. Translated from the Greek of Musaeus* (London: Methuen, 1920). The Greek text with English and French translations can be found online. There are critical editions of the Greek by Arthur Ludwich, *Musaios, Hero und Leandros, mit ausgewählten Varianten und Scholien* (Bonn: Marcus und Weber, 1912), which adds Ovid's two epistles as an appendix, and on which Färber's text is largely

difficult to compare, both in form and approach, since they offer such varied perspectives.¹⁹ It is unclear whether Musaios knew Ovid, or whether they both knew a shared (Greek?) source. Where Ovid gives an inventive formal twist, and concentrates on the sexual relationship between the pair, depending upon the knowledge of the tale for the audience to fill in the ending, Musaios presents us with the whole tale as a tragedy. He provides us, for example, with a centrally placed, clear and compelling reason for the prohibition and for the need for secrecy which leads to Leander's nocturnal swimming of the Hellespont. Musaios does, however, still present the story as a well-known one.

The epyllion opens in formal style with an invocation to the muse to sing the tale of the lamp, the witness of the secret love of the pair who are named only later, and the whole of that opening concentrates upon the key memorable feature, the lamp (*lukhnon*, *Erotos agalma*, 8, lamp, the glory of Eros) which ought, we are told, to be a star in the skies, since it brought the lovers together until a storm extinguishes it and leads to the destruction of Leander (*ollumen-oio Leandrou*, 15). The lamp as a symbol bridges the positive and negative aspects of the tale, but the last words of the opening section refer already to the tragic conclusion.

Musaios sets the scene in Sestos and Abydos and introduces the characters, the handsome (*himeroeis*) Leander and the virgin (*parthenos*) Hero, stressing how suited they are to each other, and joining them with an image of how Eros bound them together with a single arrow, arousing in each the passion

based; and by Karlheinz Kost, *Musaios, Hero und Leander. Einleitung, Text, Übersetzung und Kommentar* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1971). See finally Domenico (Dominicus) Bo, *Musaei Lexikon* (Hildesheim: Olms, 1966). Secondary literature is plentiful. Montiglio (who has a very full bibliography) offers a good introduction, with interesting linguistic details, *Hero and Leander*, pp. 60–99, concluding with a consideration of the work as a neo-platonic allegory, which has been suggested, but which she (properly) rejects. Useful as an introduction to Musaios and the history of the story is the Belgian Master's thesis (in Dutch) by Berenice Verhelst, *Mousaios' Ta kath' Hero kai Leandron en Hero en Leander van Mousaios naar het Nederlands vertaald* (University of Ghent, Faculty of Letters, 2009) and online; she looks in detail at the reception on a comparative basis, considering a range of translations and adaptations, as well as offering a modern Dutch translation and an excellent bibliography. There are translations into most European languages, often with useful introductions, such as that into Italian by Migotto, *Museo*.

- 19 There is an extended comparison by Gerhard Schott, *Hero und Leander bei Musaios und Ovid* (Diss. Cologne: Mauersberger, 1957), about which Färber, *Musaios*, p.96n4 comments that it shows how unproductive such a comparison can be. An earlier study is that by Georg Knaack, "Hero und Leander", in: *Festgabe für Franz Susemihl* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1989), pp. 46–82, with an emphasis on Musaios. See also Anna Tiziana Drago, "Il mare d'amore: storia di un topos nella letteratura greca", in: *Il Mare e il mito*, ed. Stefano Amendola and Paola Volpe (Naples: M. D'Auria, 2010), pp. 111–26, esp. pp. 121–6.

for the other. He then speaks directly to the reader, underlining the reality of the story by suggesting that if the reader ever goes to Sestos they should seek out the tower from which Hero used to shine the light (a technique familiar as a corroborative device in folk-tales and elsewhere). They should then note the roaring seas of the Hellespont, which to this day bewails the fate and love of Leander (*moron kai erota Leandrou* 27). This second part of the opening, then, also ends with the death of Leander. Musaios, quite unlike Ovid, is telling us a story which is already complete.

Hero, we now learn, is from a noble family loved by Zeus (*diotrephes*, 30), but most important of all, and a defining feature in the history of the narrative, she is a priestess of Aphrodite (Kypris), living in the ancestral tower. She has always been isolated, kept apart from other young women for fear of damaging her reputation (because her beauty could easily attract their envy), and she fulfils her duties to the cult of the goddess. The conclusion of this explanatory section is again significant for its glimpse into Hero's mind, especially in the light of later versions of the tale: Hero has often sacrificed to Aphrodite and to her son, Eros, because she was afraid of his flaming darts, his quiver-full of fire, the darts of love. However, the passage concludes, this was to no avail, and she did not escape his burning (*puri-pneiontas*, 41, literally 'fire-breathing') arrow.

Musaios now addresses the open question of how their love began. It is the love-festival of Aphrodite and Adonis in Sestos, to which people come from far and wide. Musaios enumerates a series of places, culminating with Abydos, from which all the citizens (*astos*) and then more specifically all the young men (*eiteos*) come, looking for young girls (*philoparthenos*, 50f.) The focus now shifts to Hero herself, as dazzling as the moon. Her beauty is presented in an accumulation of images, building up to a comparison with the Graces, whose beauty she far exceeds; but this baroque description ends with a reminder that she is a priestess.

Hero is like a goddess herself, another Aphrodite; this becomes a recurrent motif in the tradition, and Ovid's Leander made the same point, perhaps with implicit hubris. Hero's beauty strikes deep into the heart of the young men who have come to the festival, all of whom desire her quite specifically as someone to share a bed with (*homodemnion*, 70). The thoughts ascribed to the young male admirers may be extravagantly expressed — to go to the ends of the earth, to give up the chance to be an Olympian god — but the object is still sexual possession of the beautiful priestess, and their prayers end with the more realistic request to Aphrodite that, if they cannot have the priestess, then perhaps the goddess could provide them with a substitute. This, we are told, is the prayer of many young men, but with one of them it goes further.

This is, of course, Leander, described as *ainopathes* (deeply suffering, 86), whom the poetic voice initially addresses directly, describing how he has been

struck by fire, is consumed by the fiery storm, and burns with love — the whole passage (86–91) repeats the word *pur*, fire, or compounds containing it, several times, and fire plays a dominant part throughout the description of their love. Her beauty has entered through his eyes and struck directly to his heart, which encourages him to approach her. Leander now conquers Hero's heart without speaking. Pleased with his glances, she looks at him, then looks away, and her responses affect his heart and soul (*phren* combined with *thumos* in this passage implies his whole heart, mind, understanding, passions). This dramatic and realistic scene stands out after the set-piece conceits of burning arrows and the topos of the eyes as gateways to the heart. The reactions are effectively described. Hero is aware of her own beauty and pleased with its effects.

Evening comes, and the action is now more direct. Leander, bold in love as he later is in swimming, comes to the girl as soon as it is dark. Glances now give way to touch as he takes her hand, which she withdraws as if angry, but he takes hold of her garment and draws her into a darkened corner. Hero, still described as *parthenos*, virgin, 120, is hesitant and scolds him; she is after all a priestess, and this response is (we are told) appropriate to her maidenly position. It is also specific: he cannot enter her virgin bed (*parthenikes epi lektron* 127). Leander takes her comments, however, as an amorous playfulness concealing her real emotions, and kisses her neck, first declaring her to be a goddess, the equal of Aphrodite or Athena, and then developing (as do later writers) the idea that a priestess of Aphrodite should be fully aware of the rites of love, and that virginity is not a proper state for the worship of a goddess whose service requires marriage and bed (*gamos kai lektra*, 146). He adduces in fine style a series of parallels from Greek stories (including Atalanta and Melanion, and even warns her not to incur the anger of Aphrodite. Musaios tells us that his love-arousing (*erototokoisi*, 159) rhetoric sways the reluctant girl.

Leander's physical and verbal boldness is again contrasted with the response of Hero, who remains silent, shuffling her feet, adjusting her dress on her shoulder and trying to conceal her blushes. She has, nevertheless, already felt the bitter-sweet (*glukupikrou*, 166) dart of love, which inflames her. And then at last, with tears of shame, she responds. Acknowledging the power of his persuasiveness, she nevertheless continues to resist. They cannot ever be joined openly in marriage: her parents (of whom she voices a certain resentment later) would not allow this, and he could not simply stay there and enjoy a clandestine love because it is such a small society. The role of either set of parents as an obstacle to the love is a recurrent motif in the history of the narrative; here, Leander's are not really mentioned.²⁰

20 Montiglio, *Hero and Leander*, p. 81 makes this point.

Hero does, however, tell Leander — and us — that she lives in a tower by the sea outside the walls of Sestos, separated from all companions except for a single maidservant. This prompts Leander to declare that he will swim from Abydos across the Hellespont, no matter how fierce the storms and the waves may be (even if they are like a wall of fire) to be her husband (*posis*; various words are used, including *akoites*). She is to display a single light from her tower, taking care that it is not extinguished, since that would mean his death. Only now does he name himself as Leander, declaring himself to be the husband of Hero. They agree, anticipating the delights of the night.

Back in Abydos, Leander waits for the night and then, seeing the lamp, sets off, apprehensive at first of the raging seas, but then committing himself to Eros, whose fire continues to consume him. Musaios (like many later writers) plays with the idea of the burning lamp and the fire in Leander. When he arrives, Hero leads him into what is essentially a bridal chamber, although as Leander undoes Hero's girdle, Musaios offers a negative epithalamium: there were no songs, no guests, no torches, no parental blessings over this marriage bed. Hero becomes *parthenos ematie*, *nukhie gune* (287), a virgin by day, a married woman at night.²¹

The conclusion is briefly told. This is a summer-time love, but in winter the Hellespont becomes more violent and treacherous. Leander, however, is not put off and continues to swim towards the by now familiar light through the roaring sea. Musaios permits himself a rhetorical *interiectio* here: had Hero only forbidden him to come in the winter! However, longing and fate (*pothos kai moira*, 307) ensure that they are driven now not just by love but by the torch of fate itself. The icy and wintry condition are described, but Leander continues to brave the sea, with fatal results. Musaios plays with the violent battering of the winds as Leander prays to Aphrodite, Poseidon and Boreas, but none assists him, nor can Eros help when the currents exhaust him. An otherwise lively description ends in a somewhat mannered fashion: water pours down Leander's throat without refreshing him, and a wind extinguishes the lamp and the life and love of Leander. Hero gazes across the sea in vain, realises that the lamp had gone out and finds her drowned bedfellow. She throws herself from the heights of the tower and we are told succinctly in the final line that the lovers are thus united in death. There is no elaboration of this, no

21 See on this (recurrent) concept as a male fantasy, with comments on the nature of social order: Helen Morales, "Gender and Identity in Musaeus' Hero and Leander", in: *Constructing Identities in Late Antiquity*, ed. Richard Miles (London: Routledge, 1999), pp. 41–69. Montiglio, *Hero and Leander*, p. 186 refers to this as Musaios's "signature motif". C. S. Lewis has called it her "consistent hypocrisy".

summary, and no moralising. There are rhetorical flourishes in the text, either from Leander himself or from the narrator, but for the most part the story is told directly.

4 Conclusion

Ovid, Musaios and Martial (and perhaps also Vergil) set the scene for most of the subsequent literary reception of the narrative, although new versions can have their own agendas, and different aspects of the various classical versions are developed or emphasised. The sexual aspects (and perhaps the absence of direct tragedy in Ovid) can even lead in a different direction, to parody. Vergil's assumption that the story is well-known, and that the love is excessive might have influenced moralised medieval versions. Martial's memorable plea by Leander on his (final) attempt to swim the Hellespont is found in Scots ballads, in longer poems and plays, and even on the title-page of a pamphlet giving the synopsis of a ballet-performance, but especially in the many Leander-sonnets of the Spanish Golden Age. The sexuality of the relationship made so clear in Ovid is frequently echoed, perhaps most notably in Marlowe. Although many elements of Musaios's work are imitated or taken over, the establishing of Hero as a priestess in this text is of the greatest importance to the reception, as is the hint that she might at the outset be using that role to avoid the reality of love, making her initial responses to Eros and her gradual submission to her own feelings equally striking. The question of vocation will be explored most fully by Grillparzer.

The three principal classical models are influential, too, on the form and style of later treatments. Musaios's epyllion sets the pattern for many of the renaissance versions, treating the theme as a brief complete epic. The concept and form of Ovid's *Heroides*, the epistolary complaints of abandoned women, have, of course, had a great many echoes and imitations, and letters remain a recurrent (and occasionally quite gratuitous) element in the telling of this tale,²² even if the notion of presenting the lovers as separate from each other remains unusual. The central thought in Martial's two epigrams is regularly cited directly as a focal point in shorter pieces.

22 See Alison Thorne's and Danielle Clarke's papers on Michael Drayton's *England's Heroicall Epistles* in: *Renaissance Studies* 22 (2008), 368–84 and 385–400 (a collective issue on the *Heroides*). One of the eighteenth-century English chapbooks, for example, even includes additional letters between the lovers.

Ovid (Often) Moralised: the Middle Ages

*O edel vrouwe ende goede man,
Hier salmen truwelik deyncken an.
Hier liet truwe truwe bliken.*



Before the publication of Musaios at the end of the fifteenth century, the narrative of Hero and Leander was known in Western Europe principally by way of Ovid, the influence of whose writings on medieval literature is in any case considerable. Commentaries and glossed texts were produced and were much used in the schools in France and Italy in particular.¹ Ovid clearly made a great impression on some medieval writers, for all that his eroticism might not have sat too well with the calling of churchmen like the abbot (and later archbishop) Baudri, who was nevertheless a great admirer. Ovid's style and subjects could, however, be adapted into a Christian context. Full-scale versions of the tale of Hero and Leander are known in prose and verse in a variety of medieval languages, either free-standing or contained within larger works, usually drawing on Ovid, even if it is not always clear in what form or how well the text

¹ See Dorothy M. Robotham, "Ovid in the Middle Ages", in: *Ovid*, ed. J. W. Binns (London: RKP, 1973), pp. 191–209; Ralph Hexter, "Ovid in Translation in Medieval Europe", in: *Übersetzung. Translation. Traduction*, ed. Harald Kittel et al. (Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, 2007), pp. 131–38 and (on commentaries) Ralph Hexter, *Ovid and Medieval Schooling* (Munich: Arbo-Gesellschaft, 1986) and Montiglio, *Hero and Leander*, pp. 119f. on the *accessus*-literature in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries (usually stressing excessive love). On this topic see E. A. Quain, "The Medieval Accessus ad Auctores", *Traditio* 3 (1945), 215–64. See also James G. Clark, Frank T. Coulson and Kathryn L. McKinley, edd. *Ovid in the Middle Ages* (Cambridge: CUP, 2011), in which Robert Black's chapter, "Ovid in Medieval Italy", discusses glossed texts of the *Heroides*. See also vol. 30 of *Cahiers de recherches médiévales et humanistes* (2015), edited by Emmanuelle Baumgartner, with a variety of papers, principally but not only on the French *Ovide moralisé*; and Laurence Harf-Lancer, Lawrence Mathey-Maille and Michelle Szkilnik, *Ovide métamorphosé. Les lecteurs médiévaux d'Ovide* (Paris: Presses Sorbonne, 2009). Far earlier and concerned principally with the *Metamorphoses* is the pioneering study by Karl Bartsch, *Albrecht von Halberstadt und Ovid im Mittelalter* (Quedlinburg and Leipzig: Basse, 1861, repr. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1965).

of the *Heroides* was known.² The narrative also requires preliminary contextualisation and a conclusion, which Ovid does not provide directly. Whether Musaios's poem was known (or known about) even by writers in Italy during the middle ages proper is an open question.

1 Early Translations of Ovid

Translations of the *Heroides* are plentiful in the medieval period, an early example being that into Greek prose by the prolific Byzantine scholar Maximus Planudes (ca 1255–ca 1305), whose *Metaphrasis* has been described as “flat and bald”, with numerous errors in translation and some gaps.³ Early Italian translations include a widely disseminated prose version with brief prologues by the Florentine notary, Filippo Ceffi in around 1325; his prologue to the Leander letter summarises the story and locates the pair on two islands. A necessarily freer Italian translation into ottava rima by the Tuscan Domenico da Montic(i)elli, also of the fourteenth century, provides longer verse prologues to the letters (or pairs of letters), and there is an introduction of six strophes preceding the letter from Leander which matches that of Ceffi, by whom he was influenced. Both versions found their way into print at an early stage. Ceffi's prose summary of the tale tells how the drowned Leander was thrown naked by a dolphin onto the shore in front of his lover (“per uno dalfino fue gittato alla proda della sua amante tutto ignudo”, echoed in Monticelli's verse); Ovid's Hero dreams ominously of a dolphin, and they play various parts throughout the tradition.⁴ A further verse translation allegedly by a contemporary of Boccaccio,

2 Jellinek, *Sage*, discusses German and Dutch versions. I consider the German and (more briefly) the Latin and Dutch texts in my “Die Bearbeitungen des Hero-und-Leander-Stoffes in Mittelalter”, *Studi medievali* 18 (1977), 231–47. Most of the medieval texts are considered by Montiglio, *Hero and Leander*; see also Volker Mertens and Ulrich Müller, *Epische Stoffe des Mittelalters* (Stuttgart: Kröner, 1984), p. 286f., and Irene Sebastián Perdices, “Leandro y Hero de la Edad Media al Renacimiento”, *Medievalia* 18 (2015), 209–16.

3 It is included in Palmer's 1898 edition of the *Heroides*, pp. 159–274. See Palmer's introduction, pp. xlvii–liii on the translation and its relationship to the Latin. Planudes also translated the *Metamorphoses*.

4 See Egidio Bellorini, *Note sulle traduzioni italiane delle 'Eroidi' di Ovidio anteriori al rinascimento* (Turin: Loescher, 1900). Much of the study is devoted to Ceffi, with an appendix listing manuscripts and translations. He notes too an anonymous prose translation which does not contain the Hero and Leander letters (and a poetic fragment, which is also not relevant). There is a chapter on Domenico da Monticelli, pp. 41–56, with notes on manuscripts and prints, pp. 79–85. For a list including later printed translations see Jacopo Maria Paitoni, *Biblioteca degli autore antichi greci e latini volgarizzati* III. O-R (Venice: Storti, 1767), pp. 70–82. There is a modern edition of Ceffi by Massimo Zaggia, *Ovidio. Volgarizzamento*

published in Venice by Bernardino di Vitale in 1532 under the fictitious name Carlo Figiovanni, *Epistole d'Ouidio* is an anonymous sixteenth-century production.⁵ There is a translation into Catalan prose in the final quarter of the fourteenth century by Guillem Nicolau, a cleric at the court of the king of Aragon in Barcelona,⁶ and into Castilian prose by the Galician Juan Rodríguez de la Cámara (or del Padrón, 1390–1450), who was influenced by Ovid in his own writings, and whose role in establishing Spanish sentimental prose has been stressed. His translation (in his *Bursario* in 1440) has explanations, omissions, and three extra letters. The work has been dismissed as “a careless, slipshod piece of work”, which often drew on the earlier adaptations of some of the letters in the Spanish *General estoria* commissioned by (and sometimes ascribed to) Alfonso X, *el Sabio*, King of Castile and León, compiled between 1270 and his death in 1284, which contains paraphrases of ten epistles from the first part of the *Heroides* (but not of the double letters, although there are some references to Hero and Leander in the work). Juan Rodríguez saw the narrative as Ovid’s criticism of excessive love.⁷ There is an apparently independent man-

fiorentino trescento di Filippo Ceffi (Florence: Sismel, 2009–15). Ceffi’s text was printed by Sixtus Riessinger (or Reissinger, or other variants, ca 1440–ca 1505), probably in Rome, in the last third of the fifteenth century, and there is an edition by Vincenzo Monti and Giuseppe Bernardoni, *Epistole eroiche di Ovidio Nasone* (Milan: Bernardoni, 1842); there are annotations to each letter (see pp. 169–91, citation on p. 169). Monticelli’s text is online in a digitised version of an (unpaginated) printed text from 1491. The incipit refers to the “libro del Epistole di Ouidio in rima: vulgarizate p[er] messere Dominico da Monticelli toschano”. The colophon gives the printer as Pre Baptista de Farfengo (Brescia, 1491). Bellorini refers to a print of 1489. The author, whose name is variously spelt, was presumably born in Montecchiello in Tuscany. The dolphin comment opens the last stanza of the six-stanza introduction to the two letters.

- 5 On this pseudo-medieval translation see Hexter, “Ovid in Translation”.
- 6 Guillem Nicolau was a cleric at the courts of Pere III (the Ceremonious, sometimes styled Peter IV with the inclusion of the House of Navarre) and his son, John I, of Catalonia and Aragon. His Catalan translation (with some explanatory comments) of the *Heroides* was written before 1389. There is a full discussion of his work with some text-examples and manuscript illustrations by Josep-David Garrido i Valls, “La traducció catalana medieval de les *Heroides* d’Ovidi”, *Faventia* 24/2 (2002), 37–53 (online). See p. 52 on the additions to the Hero and Leander letters, summarising the narrative and explaining where Sestos and Abydos are.
- 7 *Obras de Juan Rodríguez de la Cámara (ó del Padrón)*, ed. Antonio Paz y Meliá (Madrid: Sociedad de Bibliófilos Españoles, 1884), pp. 195–313 (in the Appendix). The relevant letters are on pp. 273–85 (with some verses and commentary material). Paz y Meliá is critical of the translation, as is Olga Tudorica Impey, “The Literary Emancipation of Juan Rodríguez del Padrón”, *Speculum* 55 (1980), 305–16, esp. p. 306f., whose disparaging comment on the work is cited. On Alfonso see J. Javier Puerto Benito, *The ‘Heroides’ in Alfonso X’s General Estoria: Translation, Adaptation, Use, and Interpretation of a Classical Work in a Thirteenth-Century Iberian History of the World* (Lexington, KY: U Kentucky PhD dissertation, 2008) and at: uknowledge.uky.edu/gradschool_diss/611/, esp. pp. 263–7. See further Irene Salvo García,

uscript prose version of the *Heroides* in Spanish in the Biblioteca Colombina in Seville from the important collection of Hernando Colón, the scholarly and bibliophile son of Christopher Columbus.⁸

The first independent and full French translation (some of the letters had already appeared in prose in the context of the 'Matter of Troy' in the fourteenth century), is that by Octavien de Saint-Gelaise (1468–1502), a churchman and Bishop of Angoulême, which was made in 1490–3. It survives in many manuscripts⁹ and was much copied and printed, standing at the beginning of a flood of increasingly accessible Ovid translations, followed by those of the recently edited Musaios, which soon led to literary versions incorporating material from both writers.

2 Allusions and Incorporations

Brief allusions to the characters and to some or all of the narrative are common from Vergil onward, and throughout the middle ages the story remained familiar enough to allow for both concise and longer allusions in other writings. A medieval Latin poem of the eleventh or twelfth century from France, known in two manuscripts and beginning *Parce continuis* (cease your endless lamenting), has a stanza in one version describing how *Amor* can lead one into the danger of scorning fire or — crucially — the Bosphorus. Hero and Leander are not named; she is 'the woman of Sestos', *Sestias*, while he is just *iuvēnis*, the youth. Although the young man had often swum he perishes before her eyes as she waits. The tales of Pyramus and of Orpheus are both included in the poem.¹⁰ There are Latin poetic references, too, by two clerics, a very slight one

"Las *Heroidas* en la *General Estoria* de Alfonso X", *Cahiers d'études hispaniques médiévales* 32 (2009), 205–228. Alfonso x also has one letter (Dido) in the *Estoria de España*.

8 In his edition of Juan Rodríguez, p. xxxf, Paz y Meliá considered the manuscript to be related to the *Bursario*. There is, however, a detailed comparison (also with the letters translated for Alfonso el Sabio) by Rosa Maria Garrido, "Heroidas de Ovidio, Manuscrito de la Biblioteca Colombina", in: *Actas II Congreso Internacional de la Asociación Hispanica de la Literatura Medieval*, ed. José Manuel Lucía Megías et al. (Alcalá de Henares: Universidad de Alcalá, 1992), pp. 355–63 (online).

9 An impressive example is that made by Jean Michel for Louise de Savoie in 1497 (Bibliothèque Nationale, MSS Franc. 875; to be seen on the Gallica website) with miniatures by Robinet Testard, including on fol. 110r a fine Hero in elegant fifteenth-century clothes, writing a letter; there is a candle in her window.

10 The poem is printed and translated, with an analysis of the two versions, in Dronke, *European Love-Lyric*, II, 341–52. He rejects an ascription to Abelard, and discusses the complex relationship of the manuscripts; our strophe is in the later of them. See D. A. Traill,

by the immensely learned Alexander Neckam (1157–1217), and a neat epigram by the equally versatile Peter of Blois (ca 1130–1211), which plays on the name of Hero by saying *Leander ero*, “I shall be Leander”.¹¹

The eight-word situational summary by Petrarch (1304–74) has already been cited, and there are comments by Dante (1265–1321) in the *Purgatorio* XXVIII, 73–5 using Leander and the Hellespont in a comparison, and by Chaucer (ca 1343–1400) in the Host’s introduction to the *Man of Law’s Tale*, (“The dreynte Leandre for his Erro” 69), as well as several in Boccaccio (1313–76): in the *Amorosa visione*, in the *Teseida*, and various in *Filocolo*, while sorrow is expressed for Hero in *Fiammetta*, where the (developed and realised) image of Leander’s body pushed to shore by a dolphin, is again used.¹² All such references illustrate knowledge of the tale, the most casual example provided, perhaps, by John Gower (ca 1330–1408) in the late fourteenth century Middle English *Confessio Amantis*, who tells us how Phyllis, waiting by the shore for the never-returning Demophoön, regularly sets a lantern at the top of a tower. There are some similarities between Hero and Phyllis, who, in the second of the *Heroides*, also watches the sea at night. However, the lantern and the tower, which are not in her letter, seem to indicate that Gower has borrowed them from Hero.¹³

3 Practical Handbooks and the *Fasciculus morum*

The story, which would be moralised in detail in various medieval works, had already been given an allegorical interpretation in the mythographic handbook

“*Parce continuis* — A New Text and Interpretative Notes”, *Mittelateinisches Jahrbuch* 21 (1986), 114–24 and Montiglio, *Hero and Leander*, pp. 106–8.

- 11 Montiglio, *Hero and Leander*, p. 160, cites the two Latin references, both probably from England (Neckam is misprinted as Neckar). The more interesting epigram by Peter of Blois is in C. Wollin, “Hero und Leander an der Themse: ein unbekanntes Epigramm Peters von Blois”, *Sacris Erudiri* 29 (2000), 383–93. It is not amongst his poetry in the *Patrologia Latina*.
- 12 The allusion in Dante is simply to Leander’s hatred of the stretch of water which separated him from his love, a more serious version of the way in which, according to Shakespeare’s mechanicals, Pyramus felt about the wicked wall. See Montiglio, *Hero and Leander*, pp. 148–60, although Boccaccio’s references are perhaps not quite so significant as she implies. Montiglio refers also p. 249n61 to an allusion by the chronicler Jean Froissart (ca 1337–ca 1410) on the death of Leander in his *Le joli buisson de jonece* 3192–3207 (the fine bush of youth). There is much on the French and Italian material in particular in Katherine Heinrichs, *The Myths of Love: Classical Lovers in Medieval Literature* (University Park and London: Pennsylvania State UP, 1990), especially on Christian moralisations.
- 13 See the translation into modern English by Terence Tiller: John Gower, *Confessio Amantis* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1963), p. 158 (IV, 816–22).

of Fulgentius, and later by the third Vatican Mythographer.¹⁴ The story appears, too, in medieval encyclopaedic works and in manuals for preachers. Silvia Montiglio and others have noted its use in two French works, the allegorical *Livre des Eschez amoureux moralisés* by Évrart de Conty (or Conti, d. 1405), the ‘moralised amorous game of chess’, and more especially in the *Archiloge Sophie, qui parle de l’amour de sapience*, ‘on the love of knowledge’, by the Augustinian Jacques Le Grand (Jacobus Magnus, ca 1360–1425).¹⁵ A good example of the use of the story in an ecclesiastical context, however, albeit one with a significant oddity, is provided by the *Fasciculus morum*, an early fourteenth-century Latin handbook for preachers by an English Franciscan, extant in nearly thirty manuscripts. It is arranged according to the deadly sins, and the tale is included under lechery (*luxuria*), in a subsection on fornication. The writer cites Ovid as his source but tells us how “quidam iuvenis He[ro] nomine puellam quandam Landam nomine multum adamavit” (a certain young man called Hero was much in love with a certain girl called Landa). Both (gender-reversed) names are distorted in the manuscripts. He sails across the sea (*navigavit*) when she is sitting in a tower and had set up a lantern (*lucernam*) to guide him. But a storm puts out the light, he drowns, and she throws herself into the sea for grief (*pre dolore precipitatur*). She is, we are then told, the rational soul and the young man is the body, the helper of the soul (a play on *iuvenis* and *iuvare*). They have of course a natural bond with each other. The light is the light of reason, but it can be extinguished by the storm of lust ([*tempestas*] *carnalis concupiscencie*), the body drowns, and the soul is also flung down. Notwithstanding the garbled name-swapping, the loss of the location (but not of Ovid), and the fact that the young man does not swim but sails, the basis of story is preserved and then interpreted. The biblical link is then made with Psalm 68: 3 (= Vulgate iuxta LXX; AV 69: 2). The lovers are not condemned as such — the man is not a fool,

- 14 See Winthrop Wetherbee, “Learned Mythography: Plato and Martianus Capella”, in: *The Oxford Handbook of Medieval Latin Literature*, ed. Ralph J Hexter and David Townsend, (Oxford: OUP, 2012), pp. 335–55, much of it on Ovid. See especially pp. 350–3 on John Ridewall (Johannes Ridovalensis, 14th century), who was influenced by Fulgentius, on the *Ovide moralisé*, and also on Pierre Bersuire (Petrus Berchorius, ca 1290–1362), whose own *Ovidius moralizatus*, made *ad usum praedicatorum*, was widely known and translated into French (by Colard Mansion) and English (by Thomas Walley), but does not cover the tale. The Third Vatican Mythographer, who follows Fulgentius, is in Färber, *Musaïos*, pp. 74–7.
- 15 Montiglio, *Hero and Leander*, p. 136f. (the title given for the *Archiloge Sophie* is slightly confusing). On the homiletic use of Ovid see Frank T. Coulson, “Ovid’s Transformation in Medieval France, ca 1100–ca 1350”, in: *Metamorphosis: The Changing Face of Ovid in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, ed. Alison Keith and Stephen Rupp (Toronto: Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2007), pp. 33–60. See also Kathryn L. McKinley, *Reading the Ovidian Heroine. ‘Metamorphosis’ Commentaries* (Leiden: Brill, 2001), although Hero is not included in her examples.

she is not a temptress, and the love as such is natural (*amor naturalis*); the narrative is simply subsumed under a general warning against the perils of carnal concupiscence. The allegorical reading and the narrative are kept separate.¹⁶

4 Lists and Inclusions

Often the names of the couple are included with others in lists of exemplary (either praiseworthy or doomed) lovers. The twelfth-century troubadours Raimund Jordan and Arnaud de Mareuil provide examples, and the lovers are mentioned in the early thirteenth-century Anglo-Norman *Roman d'Yder*, as well as in the roughly contemporary medieval German Arthurian rhymed epic *Diu Crône* (the crown), of Heinrich von dem Türlin, whose list may be based on that in the Yder romance, although both were composed in around 1220. Heinrich's list is of the central figures in famous love-stories, mostly classical, who have come to tragic ends, including again the "drowned Leander"; there is no mention of Hero or her fate, although Pyramus and Thisbe (their regular companions) are cited together, as well as other literary pairs. Both are named as famous lovers who are the subject of songs in the Occitan romance of *Flamenca* in the thirteenth century.¹⁷ The thrust of these lists of lovers varies; Leander especially is often included among love's fools, those who have loved not wisely but too excessively, a point of view indicated already by Vergil, and it has been pointed out that the moralisation of the tale in the French *Ovide moralisé* establishes the view of Leander in the context of *fole amour*.¹⁸ Much later, at the end of the fifteenth century, the satirical poem *Narrenschiff*,

16 *Fasciculus Morum. A Fourteenth-Century Preacher's Handbook*, ed. trans. Siegfried Wenzel (University Park and London: Pennsylvania State UP, 1989), pp. 668–671.

17 On the troubadours, see Olive Sayce, *Exemplary Comparison from Homer to Petrarch* (Cambridge: Brewer, 2008), pp. 146f. and 149f. (with texts). The stock attitude is that 'even Leander never loved Hero as much as....' Arnaut appears himself in the version of the story by Giovanni Girolamo Nadal. *Diu Crône von Heinrich von dem Türlin*, ed. Gottlob H. F. Scholl (Stuttgart, 1852, repr. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1966), p. 142 (v. 567). The Ovidian characters in such lists are discussed (with reference also to the Yder-romance) by Lewis Jillings, "The Abduction of Arthur's Queen in 'Diu Crône'", *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 19 (1975), 26–34, see p. 31. On the *Roman d'Yder*, Heinrich, and the *Flamenca* see Puerto Benito, *The 'Heroides' in Alfonso X's General Estoria*, pp. 180f., 185–7 and 190–7. He also discusses the locations as islands, p. 89f, and refers p. 174 to a possible allusion in Chrétien's *Yvain*.

18 Heinrichs, *Myth of Love*, p. 102. See also p. 167 on Guillaume de Machaut. On the lists of love's fools, see Friedrich Maurer, "Der Topos von den 'Minnesklaven'", *Deutsche Vierteljahresschrift* 27 (1953), 182–206.

the ship of fools, by Sebastian Brant (1457–1521), printed in 1494 and widely and rapidly translated into other languages, places Leander amongst fools ensnared by love in the section on *buolschafft* (love-affairs, lechery). What is striking, however, is that Brant's list of those captured by Cupid includes Ovid himself, "who lost the favour of the emperor because he wrote about the arts of love".¹⁹ Leander as a fool for love is often the standpoint in medieval versions, although he can also be presented as the embodiment of *Minnedienst*, of exaggerated courtly love-service to his lady, something which is, to be fair, not too distant from folly. Equally, lists of heroines who have been conquered by love sometimes permit Hero a solo appearance. There is an example as early as the fifth century in the reference to "the lady of Sestos" together with Dido, Phyllis and Evadne by Sidonius Apollinaris.²⁰

Against these brief allusions may be set longer passages which can contain the whole story. Some of these merit independent treatment, such as those in the *Ovide moralisé*, in Baudri's mythological fragment, in Dirk Potter's survey of love, in Christine de Pizan's *City of Ladies*, or even in a debate-poem by Guillaume de Machaut, but it can be hard to know where to draw the line. In the twelfth century, for example, the (probably) French poet who used the name Marcus Valerius, of whom very little is known, produced in Latin a *Carmen Apollonis*, song of Apollo, in which the god sums up the tragic part of the tale in just over a dozen lines. The focus is on Leander's fatal swim as all the elements repeat *Quo ruis? heu!* (where are you going? alas! 60 and 61).²¹ At the very end of the Middle Ages the Scots poet Gavin Douglas (ca 1475–1522) also has a longer allusion in the prologue to the fourth book of his version of the *Aeneid*, *Eneados*, a work completed in 1513, focused once more mainly on Leander's nocturnal swim through the troubled and stormy sea between Europe and Asia.²²

- 19 Sebastian Brant, *Das Narrenschiff*, ed. Manfred Lemmer (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2nd ed. 1968), p. 35; and trans. (into modern German) by H. A. Junghans, ed. Hans-Joachim Mähl (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1964), pp. 50–55 (XIII, 49 and 75f). There were many printings in the decades following 1494. The work was translated into Latin by Brant's pupil Jakob Locher (1471–1528) and by Jodocus Badius (Badius Ascensius, 1462–1535); into French by Pierre Rivière, then by Jean Droyn, put into English by Alexander Barclay (with a prose version by Henry Watson printed by Wynkyn de Worde in 1517): see Arthur Tilley, *The Literature of the French Renaissance* (Cambridge: CUP, 1885), pp. 171–3. A modern English version is that by Edwin H. Zeydel, *The Ship of Fools* (New York: Columbia UP, 1944).
- 20 Färber, *Musaïos*, p. 68f. and (with more of the text) Sayce, *Exemplary Comparison*, p. 96.
- 21 Färber, *Musaïos*, p. 82f. and notes p. 111f. Montiglio, *Hero and Leander*, p. 115f.
- 22 *Virgil's Aeneid. Translated into Scottish Verse by Gavin Douglas*, ed. David F. C. Coldwell (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1950–56), II, 149 (Prologue to Book IV, 70–80).

Somewhat different is the allusion to the tale (probably by way of Ovid, although it is impossible to be definite) in the vision-poem *Gloria d'Amor* written between 1453 and 1461 by the Catalan poet known as Fra Rocaberti, in which the visionary and his companions find themselves at — and recognise — the Hellespont. They are met by Leander, who takes them across, swimming to Sestos (where Xerxes was defeated by the Greeks, we hear), and they are greeted courteously by Hero. The visionary learns that love can transform the mind, and they watch as “Los dos amants dins Cesto s'en intraren/ E nos restam ab pensa dolorosa” (the two lovers go into [the castle of] Sestos, and we remained, our thoughts sad). We do not actually have the story, particularly not the tragic aspects; the point is simply that these two are known as famous lovers. The story as such is old, yet within this vision the pair seem to be living in the paradise of lovers in an eternal present.²³

5 Leander at Troy

Hero and Leander are referred to occasionally in universal chronicles — that commissioned by Alfonso X has been noted — but there is a literary tradition linking Leander himself with the siege of Troy, indeed placing him there in the *Greek* army. The route taken is, in literary-historical terms, extraordinarily complex in the interplay of historical romance, chronicle, adaptation and borrowing.²⁴ Benoît de Saint-Maure (fl. 1150–80) dedicated his *Roman de Troie*, a legendary metrical history of Troy, to Eleanor of Aquitaine, and it is essentially a romance, much concerned with aspects of love. The first version of that work (ca 1160) compares the impetuosity of Leander, who for the love of Hero, “se mist en mer par nuit obscure” (went into the sea in the dark night) with the behaviour of Achilles.²⁵ Benoît's poem was over the next centuries adapted into prose several times, and the fifth of these prose recensions contains what

23 Apparently from a well-known Catalan family, precisely which member Fra Rocaberti was is unclear. His title implies a monk or a member of a religious-military order. The work can be dated by internal evidence. There is an edition by M. C. Heaton, *The Gloria d'Amor of Fra Rocaberti. A Catalan Vision-Poem of the 15th Century* (New York: Columbia UP, 1916). The introduction contains a useful synopsis of the text, pp. 16–41. The relevant section is lines 1142–93, (summary on p. 35, text on p. 86f.) Lines 1191f. are cited.

24 On the involved interrelationship of chronicles, see the indispensable two-volume *Encyclopaedia of Medieval Chronicles*, ed. Graeme Dunphy (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2010). The entry on ‘Authorship’ by Cristian Bratu, I, 133–6, is enlightening.

25 *Benoît de Saint-Maure, Le Roman de Troie*, ed. Léopold Constans (Paris: Didot, 1904–12), III, 388–9 (lines 22120–6: 22125 is cited).

is in effect the first partial translation of some of the *Heroides* into French. It is itself part of a universal chronicle.

The prose *Histoire ancienne jusqu'à Cèsar*, attributed to Wauchier de Demain, is a chronicle of ancient history 'down to Caesar', originally produced sometime between 1220 and 1230, and it contains a long section on the Trojan war. The original version of this section was, like many other medieval works on Troy, based upon Latin translations of the allegedly personal accounts by Dares of Phrygia and Dictys of Crete, but it was replaced in later recensions by a prose version of Benoît's *Roman* (which had, in fact, itself made use of those sources). The so-called fifth prose of Benoît's *Roman* is found in a version of the *Histoire ancienne* made in Naples in 1330–40.²⁶ Into this prose version of Benoît is placed the *Epîtres des dames de Grece*, the 'letters of Greek ladies', the *Heroides*, letters to (and from) their husbands or lovers who are away fighting at Troy. The letters, in Ovidian order, appear after the tenth and twelfth battles of the Trojan war, and they include both those of Leander and of Hero. Leander is less easy to place plausibly at the siege of Troy, but in Ovid's version, of course, he does not actually die in the Hellespont. Montiglio has noted not only how the French adaptation avoids the indications of Leander's later death, but also that this time the love also has to be concealed from Leander's Greek fellow-soldiers. She points out, too, the emphasis in the letters on the (modified) courtly aspects of their love, an approach established by Benoît in general terms at the beginnings of this Trojan adventure.²⁷

6 Baudri of Bourgueil, 'De Hero et Leandro' (Poem CCXVI, 954–1053)

Baudri (Baldericus, Baldric, Balderich, of Dol, 1046–1130), Abbot of Bourgueil in the Loire Valley and later Archbishop of Dol, composed a substantial body of prose and verse, most of it probably during his abbacy (after 1089) and before

26 There are nearly seventy manuscripts, many illustrated. There is a modern text of *L'Histoire ancienne jusqu'à César*, ed. Catherine Gaullier-Bongassas (Turnhout: Brepols, 2012). The *Histoire* was translated into Catalan in 1400–19.

27 Montiglio, *Hero and Leander* offers a clear summary, pp. 116–8, of the fifth prose recension of the *Roman* and the letters. The letters are edited by Luca Barbieri, *Les Epîtres des dames de Grèce. Une version médiévale en prose française des Héroides d'Ovide* (Paris: Champion, 2007). There was a notice of them by Alfred Colville, "Les Espistles que le Dames de Grece envoient a leurs maris", *Comptes rendus des séances de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres*, 84 (1940), 98–109. The 'Matter of Troy' is enormously ramified: see the introduction to *Pedro de Chinchilla, Libro de la historia troyana*, ed. Maria Dolores Peláez Benítez (Madrid: Editorial Complutense, 1999), pp. 3–58, for a survey of French, Italian and Spanish histories of Troy.

his translation to Dol in Brittany in 1107. He admired Ovid and imitated him in what were probably school exercises, though he also exchanged verse epistles in the style of the *Heroides* (albeit with a rather different content) with a nun named Constance.²⁸ His version of the tale of Hero and Leander occupies about a hundred lines in a long but fragmentary mythological poem in elegiac verse probably composed as a (slightly mannered) exercise or model, perhaps at the end of the eleventh century.²⁹ The title of the section is found in the margin of the Vatican manuscript.

Hero and Leander are named, but there are no place-names, not even the Hellespont. Baudri presents the background in the first fifteen lines. The pair are obsessed by their love for each other, Leander swims naked at night (*nocte natat nudus*, 957) to Hero, who holds up a torch to guide him. Leander's nakedness is regularly stressed, hardly surprising when he is swimming, but this may hark back to the erotic satisfaction in his own body implied in Ovid; it also provides for a nice alliteration. Hero's description as *virgo*, (960), presumably means simply 'young woman', since Leander is described as *iuvēnis*, (956), 'young man', although Baudri does make an authorial judgement and speak of him as *demens homo*, (959), 'foolish man'. There is no consideration of any reasons for the secrecy, although a too-watchful mother is later postulated for Hero. Baudri does permit himself an Ovidian, if somewhat unclerical, observation on the nature of love when he comments that Leander swims back to his own home more easily because he is encouraged by love: "Altus amor poterat duos leviare labores" (957, Powerful love is able to lighten the hardest of labours).

One of the key features of the *Heroides* is the anxiety and sometimes irrational fears felt by Hero. Baudri takes this up while moving to the actual

28 See on Baudri Max Manitius, *Geschichte der lateinischen Literatur des Mittelalters* (Munich: Beck, 1931), III, 883–98 and Raby, *Secular Latin Poetry*, I, 337–48. See Wetherbee, "Learned Mythography", pp. 347–53, and in the same collection (Hexter and Townsend, *Medieval Latin*), see Sylvia Parsons and David Townsend, "Gender", pp. 423–46 (pp. 437–42 on Baudri and Ovid), and Monika Otter, "Renaissance and Revivals", pp. 535–52, esp. pp. 546–8. See also Gerald A. Bond, "locus amoris: The Poetry of Baudri of Bourgueil and the Formation of the Ovidian Subculture", *Traditio* 42 (1986), 143–93; Montiglio, *Hero and Leander*, pp. 109–115.

29 Baudri's complete works have been edited by Jean-Yves Tilliette (I and II) and Armelle le Huërou (III), *Baldricus Burgulianus* (Paris: Belles Lettres, 1998–2012), with the poem in vol. II (2002). There is an earlier edition of the poem by Phyllis Abraham, *Oeuvres poétiques de Baudri de Bourgueil* (Paris: Slatkine, 1926). The edition used here is that in Färber, *Musaioi*, pp. 76–83 (with a German translation) from Cod. Vatic. Reg. 1351 by Karl Bayer. See on Baudri's relationship to the *Heroides* in general Puerto Benito, *The 'Heroides' in Alfonso X's General Estoria*, pp. 152–5.

tragedy, merging the feared outcomes adumbrated in the two letters. Leander loses his way in the sea and his strength fails him, so that he does not arrive at the usual time. Hero, waiting with the torch, imagines all kinds of things that might have caused this, notably that he might have fallen in love with someone else (the abbot tells us slightly pompously that this anxiety often happens with young women), and the idea alternates with the fear that Leander might have drowned. The idea of the potential rival fixes itself so firmly in Hero's mind that she decides to wait for him no longer, although we are told that Leander *prope nans aderat*, (991), was already close. She extinguishes the torch.³⁰ Baudri now addresses Leander, *iuvēnis miserande* (pitiable youth, 996) swimming in the dark, saying that had the torch been lit again, he might have thought the wind had simply blown it out for a moment. But it is not lit again, and the notion that it was deliberately extinguished must, says Baudri, have caused Leander more anxiety than the fear for his life. Has their clandestine love been discovered by Hero's suspicious mother (*callida mater*, 1006), who has banished Hero to her room, or has Hero been attacked, or worse, seduced? Leander's position, however, as Baudri now notes, is not the best place for doubts, and he sinks into the waves, possibly borne down by his fears. Whatever the reason (*quicquid fuerit*, 1016), Leander drowns, and his body is washed up at the place where he normally reaches the shore. Hero rushes to the body when she hears the voices of those who have found him, weeps over him and dries him with her hair (as she dries the living Leander in Ovid), and then acknowledges, in this case accurately, that she has caused his death (the motif voiced towards the end of Leander's letter in Ovid): "Care Leander," ait, 'tibi nunc occasio mortis/ infelix ego sum scilicet Hero tua' (1030f. "Beloved Leander", she says, I have brought about your death, I, your unhappy Hero"). She admits that her false fears betrayed him, implores the winds to unite their souls in death, and hurls herself into the sea onto his corpse. She kisses him a thousand times and drowns.

Baudri then offers a double moral: it is a warning against those *qui non sapienter amant*, (1045), who do not love wisely. He goes on, however, to echo Fulgentius in an allegorization of this *res impossibilis*, (1046), this 'unlikely fable' (which he attributes to the Greeks). In a complex would-be etymology of the name 'Leander', Baudri tells us that it means the power that distorts or unbalances a man's character. The distorted, dissipated man (*resolutus homo*, 1050) can give way to intemperate passions, and swim as wildly in the world as

30 See on Baudri and the motif Thomas Gärtner, "Wer löscht das Feuer? Zur Rezeption der Hero und Leander Sage im Mittelalter, Renaissance und Neuzeit", *Orbis Litterarum* 64 (2009), 263–82 (with reference also to Markos Musuros and to the later writer Kaspar von Barth).

Leander did in the sea, with inevitably fatal results. The tale, then, is a warning against excessive love (as it was already in Vergil), and in broader terms, against an intemperate and unbalanced life.

The relationship to the *Heroides* is interesting. We are not shown the lovers in a pause during their protracted relationship, but the work takes up the hints within the letters of the familiar ending to the tale and focuses upon the idea that Hero will blame herself. The clarification of guilt and the full culpability placed upon Hero is the most striking element here. One of the fears that she expresses in her letter, that Leander has found someone else, takes hold (in later versions she usually shakes it off quite quickly), and Leander, who is clearly the central figure here, dies because the torch is put out by Hero herself. Even the concept that they are joined in death is treated briefly; Hero hopes the winds will bring their spirits together as the sea takes their bodies. Seeing the love as excessive is not uncommon in medieval Ovid-commentaries and elsewhere. Baudri uses much of the *Heroides*, but his version is still ambiguous, and the moral is a somewhat stretched spin on the original story. Hero's doubts may be normal in young women, but they still cause Leander's death. *Così fan tutte?* Leander's love disturbs his balance (*distemperat*, 1052), and Baudri was certainly aware that misogynistic blame goes back to Eden. Eve is able to put Adam out of sorts in a similar manner, his loss of an even temperament leading on that occasion to the fall of mankind.³¹

7 The Admont Prose Legend: *De clerico et moniali lascivis*

A further medieval Latin reflection of the tale, in this case brief and in prose, is of considerable interest for the reception history; it retains much of the basic narrative but turns it after the death of the Leander-figure into a miracle of the Virgin Mary. The ultimate source is unclear, but echoes of Ovid's letter from Leander to Hero mean that this may have been known at some remove. The tale is relocated geographically and culturally, making it into a Christian legend with an extended and adapted ending that is theologically satisfactory.

The version is found in a twelfth-century manuscript (Admont, Codex 638) containing forty-six Latin prose Marian miracle-tales from the Benedictine abbey of Admont in Styria in Austria. In place of Hero and Leander — there are no names given — we have a (secular) cleric and a nun, but the (re-)location

31 The point is neatly made in one version of a medical textbook, the prose *Salernitan Questions*, with similar vocabulary (*distemperatus*). See Brian Murdoch, *Adam's Grace* (Cambridge: Brewer, 2000), p. 22f.

is quite specific, even if the writer, who was perhaps a monk from Admont, is not entirely clear about the water that has to be crossed.³² In place of the Hellespont is the stretch of Lake Constance (wrongly assumed to be a river) which separates the town of Lindau, which is on an island, from the lake-shore. A bridge (still) gives access to the town, and in this text it is a wooden bridge leading to the town gate, which is officially closed at night. This provides a reason for the Leander-figure to swim on one single and fatal occasion.

The status of the protagonists provides a good medieval reason for the clandestine love, coincidentally almost matching Hero's status as a priestess in the yet unknown version by Musaios. A certain cleric, described as utterly foolish and obsessed with love, serves as deacon (*officio diaconus*) to the nunnery in Lindau, which indicates that he is young, since he is not very advanced in office. He loves one of the nuns and has been, we are told, visiting her regularly at night (*venire per noctes in tenebris consuevit*). No details of how their relationship began are given, although as deacon he would have had access to the nunnery. The relationship has of course to be secret (*clam*). The nun sets a candle in her window so that he can find her. We have been told that the access bridge has a door that can be barred against unauthorised entry at night, and one night the cleric arrives too late and finds the door closed. He takes off his clothes (another Ovidian echo, here both realistic and needed for his later identification) and leaves them with a friend (*socius*) while he sets out to swim. This is not, therefore, as regular an occurrence as in other versions. Where Ovid's Leander invokes Venus and the gods to calm the waters, our cleric sets off with prayers to the Virgin. However much of an utter fool (*quamvis stultissimus*) he may be, his devotion to the Virgin is unshaken. The candle intended to guide him is blown out by no more than a puff of wind (*spirante vento*), and the man loses his way and drowns. The alarm is raised on both sides and his body is found and identified, but on his tongue they see inscribed in letter of gold: *Ave Maria gratia plena dominus tecum*.

The Christianization of the theme now leads to an entirely different ending. Both the cleric's friend and the nun (in her case tearfully and remorsefully) confess to the situation, and the sin leaves a question-mark over where the drowned cleric is to be buried. The matter is referred to the Bishop of Constance, who re-examines the body and finds that the words *salvatus est*

32 E. Winkler, "Eine mittelalterliche Fassung der Sage von Hero und Leander", *Archiv* 132 (1914), 405–8. Montiglio, *Hero and Leander*, looks at the text, p. 141f., but the Leander-figure is not a monk but a *clericus* with the office of deacon to the nunnery, so part of the secular (and less constrained) priesthood. Winkler, p. 407n2, comments that the writer was perhaps unfamiliar with the locality. A nunnery in Lindau was founded (reportedly) in the ninth century and was dissolved in 1803.

have been added to the words of the *Ave Maria*. The young man is accordingly buried in the church and the nun, stricken by guilt and regret, not for her dead lover, but for her immorality, lives henceforth a life of great penitence.³³

The emphasis is on the Leander-figure. The lascivious nun (*monialis lasciva*) is only sketchily drawn, and her thoughts at the end are of her own sinfulness, not of the dead cleric. The cleric's friend serves as one necessary witness to the miracle, as does the now penitent nun. There is no storm, just an unlucky breeze. The gods do not save Leander, nor does the Virgin Mary save her foolish but devoted cleric from drowning; this is part of the basic narrative. However, the Virgin does preserve him *post mortem* from damnation, providing us with a happy (and at least theologically sound) ending of sorts for both principal characters. The cleric is redeemed, and the nun, after a life as a penitent, will presumably also go to heaven, so that the pair will at the last share salvation, if not reunion in a Christian Elysium.

8 *Ovide moralisé* IV, 3150–3731 (Early 14th Century)

There may have been a now-lost independent French version of the tale,³⁴ but the large early fourteenth-century metrical *Ovide moralisé*, moralised Ovid, a version largely of the *Metamorphoses*, but with other Ovidian material, includes the story of Hero and Leander. It is based on the two letters of the *Heroides* and appears in book IV, 3150–3731, seemingly prompted by the legend of Helle and Phrixos and mention of the Hellespont.³⁵ The work itself, produced also in illustrated manuscripts, was translated into Catalan prose

33 It is a literary curiosity that a similar variation is recorded by Aleksandr Nikolayevich Radishchev (1749–1802) in his *Journey from St Petersburg to Moscow* (*Puteshestviye iz Peterburga v Moskvu*) in which a monk from the Iversky monastery on an island in Lake Valdaskoye falls in love with a girl in Valday, the town on the lakeshore, and swims across to her. He drowns, but she apparently survives. Radishchev acknowledges the parallel with Hero and Leander, but there seem to be none of the salvation elements. The text was published in St Petersburg in 1790, and there are modern editions (Moscow: Sovyetskaya Rossiya, 1973), with an edition by Roderick Page Thaler and translation by Leo Wiener (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1958, repr. 2014). There are also some situational parallels with the story in Straparola's version, discussed below.

34 See Wilhelm Heiske, "Königskinder und Elseinstrophe", *Jahrbuch für Volksliedforschung* 1932, 35–53, esp. p. 36 with reference to the allusion in *Flamenca* (which he misdates).

35 C. de Boer (and others for the later volumes), *Ovide Moralisé. Poème du commencement du quatorzième siècle* (Amsterdam: Müller, 1915–38) II, 78–90. The inclusion of the narrative is discussed by Didier Lechat, "Héro et Léandre dans l'*Ovide moralisé*", *Cahiers de recherches médiévales et humanistes* 9 (2002), online: <https://journals.openedition.org/crm/54>.

and appeared in two French prose versions at the end of the fifteenth century, one printed by Colard Mansion. Caxton's translation is an early English reflection.

The relevant passage falls into two parts: first comes a version of the story from Ovid, and this is followed by an extended allegorical passage containing two interpretations. In the narrative section there is an initial focus upon the role of the Hellespont as the villain of the piece. Leander is the son of a rich and powerful man in Abydos, and we are told about his love for Hero of Sestos, then that they meet when he swims the Hellespont at night, simply so that "lor amor ne fust aperte" (3180, their love did not become public). This goes on for some time, and he is guided by a flaming torch, *un brandon ardent* (later *une lanterne*). One day the sea is too wild for Leander to cross, and this proves a torment for them. Their thoughts are presented in Ovidian order, and follow Ovid quite closely, although not in letter form. The text presents the psychology of the pair and realises at the end of the Leander section the death that he imagines in Ovid. His last thoughts, that she "saura que cause est de ma mort" (3321, will know that she is the cause of my death) are followed by Hero's thoughts: "Venez conforter vostre amie" (3336, come, to comfort your love). Hero's wavering is especially well done, as is her awareness that her fears are an integral aspect of intense love. Her comparison with what he and she can do, her erotic dreams, her fears of a possible rival, her dream of the dolphin — all are there as in Ovid. Fortune and the winds extinguish her lamp, however. She awakens from her dream, finds Leander dead, throws herself into the sea, and dies embracing him. The adaptation of the *Heroides* into a complete and straightforward narrative brings us to verse 3586, so that it occupies a little over four hundred lines.

A further couple of hundred lines are devoted to two different allegorizations of the tale, which are both quite separate from it. The first is already familiar: Leander signifies dissolution (Fulgentius again), which can give way to the madness of love, as he plunges naked into folly. Hero represents *luxure*, voluptuousness, indulgence, and her torch is the burning force of love. There is play on *amer*, *mer*, *amour*, a motif that will be found elsewhere. The criticism implicit already in Vergil is made into a general moral in which the characters are shown as representing these feelings and forces (3587–3663). The second and radically different exposition of the story is more homiletic, based on the *patria paradisi* topos, in which Hero and her light represent divine wisdom, and Sestos the heavenly home, while Abydos is the world, with Leander as fallen man, driven from the earthly Paradise, having to negotiate the narrow and deep sea of moral life, following with his heart towards the divine (3664–3731). Their love is heavenly after all, at least allegorically.

9 Guillaume de Machaut, *Le Jugement dou Roy de Navarre* (ca 1349)

The medieval French composer and poet Guillaume de Machaut (ca 1300–1377) tells the story of Hero and Leander (Leandus) in less than a hundred lines within a long debate poem called “The Judgement of the King of Navarre”, which is a counter to his earlier *Jugement dou Roy de Behaigne* (Judgement of the King of Bohemia), a poem where it was decided that a jilted knight was more deserving of pity than a widowed lady.³⁶ This time the judgement is turned around and the Guillaume-figure is declared eventually to be wrong. The story of Hero and Leander (which follows that of Pyramus and Thisbe) is related by a personified Demoiselle Sufficiency (*Souffissance*) as part of an argument that women suffer more in love.³⁷ The story is told without much detail. The speaker presents the tale as a famous one, but here it is used to make a single specific point: the extent to which Hero suffers. The places are not given, although Abydos is named in passing and the unnamed Hellespont is just an arm of the sea. No other reasons are given for the separation, Hero lives in a house with a tower, rather than in a tower (3244), and she signals to Leander with *un sierge* (3246, modern French *cierge*, a large church candle). There is, of course, no indication of the origins of the love, nor much on its course, except that Leander swims naked every night. In the last stage there is much stress on Hero’s anguish and rage, which seems to be against the sea, as she awaits Leander, weeping and imploring the aid of Neptune. Although she holds up the light, he drowns, and Hero drowns herself. There is no hint at a united afterlife.

Guillaume plays, as does the *Ovide moralisé*, on the words related to love and to the sea *ami*, *amour*, *amer* [*aimer*], *mer*, perhaps the most celebrated instance of which *topos*, together with *amer* meaning ‘bitter’, is in an earlier

36 Guillaume de Machaut, *Oeuvres*, ed. Ernest Hoepffner (Paris: Didot, 1908–21). The text of the poem is in I, 137–262, with the relevant section on pp. 248–53 (vv. 3221–3364, cited). There is a translation of the work in *Guillaume de Machaut. The Complete Poetry and Music I. The Debate Poems*, ed. R. Barton Palmer (Kalamzoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2016). Montiglio, *Hero and Leander*, pp. 125–9, perhaps places too much emphasis on a perceived misogyny: Hero’s *ire* is a small part of her anguish, and the speaker still condemns Leander as foolish. Montiglio indicates links with the *Ovide moralisé* and discusses also the brief references to the tale in *Le livre dou voir dit* (which is not in Hoepffner’s edition). Leander is again shown there to be one of love’s fools.

37 There is a good summary of the two poems explaining the allegorical figures by John Fox, *A Literary History of France: The Middle Ages* (London: Benn, 1974), pp. 293–5. *Souffissance* is an allegorization of the embroidery on the garments of the main speaker, Lady Felicity (*Beneurté*). Fox comments on the use of well-known classical tales.

German poem about two other lovers, in Gottfried's *Tristan*.³⁸ Here the poet-voice defends the suffering of Leander in the debate, but it is significant that, again in line with the moralised Ovid, Leander is still condemned by the speaker as one of love's fools, *Li fols* (3331), for his action.

Guillaume's version of the story, used as it is within a debate, is not of great consequence for the history of the narrative. Which of the pair suffered more is not a regularly posed question, and the answer was never going to be conclusive. Leander dies through folly, Hero by suicide, but both die, and the usual ending of the story is a stress on their absolute equality and their unity in death. The tale sits rather uncomfortably in the context into which it is placed.

10 The Middle High German *Hero und Leander* (Early 14th Century)

An independent Middle High German poem of 486 lines in rhymed couplets from the early fourteenth century survives in the so-called Liedersaal manuscript, a fifteenth-century collective codex containing many different rhymed pieces.³⁹ This didactic version opens with a general complaint against love, which can begin sweetly, but which can conceal perils within its delights. Those

38 Gottfried von Strassburg, *Tristan*, translated A. T. Hatto (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1960), p. 199f. It comes in the poem (from the start of the thirteenth century) when Tristan is bringing Isolde from Ireland to marry King Marke, but they confess their love for each other while at sea. The motif is found in later writers, too. On the topos, see Giovanni Cipriani and Tiziano Ragno, "Il mare amaro dell'amore. Tristan, Leandro e il trionfo del paronomasia", in: *Aspetti della Fortuna dell' Antico nella Cultura Europea*, ed. E. Narducci et al. (Pisa: Edizioni ETS, 2008), pp. 73–121.

39 There are texts in: Joseph von Lassberg, *Liedersaal* (St Gall and Constance, 1846, repr. Darmstadt: WBG, 1968), I, 335–50; Friedrich Heinrich von der Hagen, *Gesammtabenteuer* (Stuttgart and Tübingen, 1850, repr. Darmstadt: WBG, 1961), I, 313–30; Richard Eduard Ottmann, *Das mittelhochdeutsche Gedicht von Hero und Leander* (Leipzig: Fock, 1895); Samuel Singer, *Mittelhochdeutsches Lesebuch* (Bern: Francke, 1945), pp. 38–45 (cited, with superscripts resolved). The dialect is Alemannic, the dating established on philological grounds. There is a partial modern German version by Paul Hansmann in *Altdeutsche Mären und Schwänke*, ed. Paul Ernst (Munich and Leipzig: Müller, 1913), I, 31–43. See on the editions Hanns Fischer, *Studien zur deutschen Märendichtung* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1968), p. 324. On the manuscript, see H. Niewöhner, "Der Inhalt von Lassbergs Liedersaal-Handschrift", *Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutschen Sprache und Literatur* 66 (1942), 153–96. The name ('hall of songs') was given by Lassberg: the manuscript, Donaueschingen 104, is now in the Karlsruhe Landesbibliothek. Niewöhner included the text in his re-edition of von der Hagen's collection, *Neues Gesamtabenteuer* (Berlin: Weidmann, 1937). For analyses of the work see Werner Fechter, *Lateinische Dichtkunst und deutsches Mittelalter* (Berlin: Schmidt, 1964), pp. 186–98 (chapter 8, devoted to the relationship

who serve love can be tested to the death, as this “foreign tale” will prove. The poet assures us that the tale is true, but he does refer regularly to a (written) source, which may of course simply formulaic: “as I have read”, “I understand”, “I have been told”. That the source is at least partially the *Heroides*, however, becomes clear.

The first part of the narrative is medieval rather than Ovidian, as the two principal characters are presented in physical detail, rather than tagged by their locations, and indeed, neither Abydos nor Sestos is mentioned. Most of the mythological allusions are also omitted, and since the Hellespont, too, is unnamed, the Helle-myth is lost. Leander is a nobleman, the son of the ruler of a great country whose capital city lay by the sea. Named at the end of the section, Leander is a mirror of stylised courtly perfection. Across the unnamed, but significantly ‘wild’ sea at a distance of *ain halb tusch mil* (40, literally ‘half a German mile’; the German mile was longer than the Roman standard) is another city, with a castle belonging to a young girl of great virtue whose parents are dead. The poet offers a similarly stylised description of her golden hair, tender cheeks and rosy mouth, and white neck, adding in this entirely Christian poem that her beauty is the gift of God (68). She is also described as richly dressed and of great virtue, and the passage ends by naming her: Hero.

No explanation is given of how the pair fell in love, but we are told of its intensity, such that both suffer its pains. Why they are separated, however, is again unclear, something implicitly admitted by the poet:

Dez moecht leander niemer komen
 Zu hero als ich han vernomen
 Wan so er nachtes uber swam
 Vnd mit swimen zu jr kam. (97–100)

(And so Leander could not, as I have been given to understand, come to Hero unless he swam across at night, and swam to her.)

When Leander is to swim, Hero places on the battlements a light that will guide him directly to the castle and they enjoy the delights of love.

The (direct or indirect) use of Ovid becomes clear when we are told first of a night when the winds are too strong for the young man to swim, then that Hero writes him a letter and sends it with a fisherman. The second of the *Heroides*-letters comes first, therefore, and Ovid is followed quite closely, albeit adapted

between the two Ovidian letters and the poem); my “Bearbeitungen”; Montiglio, *Hero and Leander*, pp. 141–4.

to medieval conventions.⁴⁰ Hero stresses the pains of love, already described in some detail in the contextualisation, and points out that she has to suffer whilst Leander can engage in all the other activities of a young noble. Her list of courtly activities is rather longer than Ovid's classical pursuits. She does, however, refer to her nurse, an old woman with whom she discusses Leander. Some of the ideas attributed to Hero by Ovid come this time from the nurse, including the image of Leander about to slip naked into the sea, although his nakedness is not as much of a motif here. Here as in Ovid the old nurse falls asleep during the questioning. Hero kisses the clothes she keeps for him, and dreams of his love, the details of which she says she will not describe. Her mental confusion is not given in as much detail, but the fear that Leander may have found another love literally brings her out in a cold sweat: "ich switz ain kalten swaiß" (194). Her letter ends on this point; she wants only that he should come to her.

The unanswered question of how the letters were delivered is developed as Leander asks the fisherman to wait so that he can write a reply, and the reversal of the order of the letters is significant in terms of motivation. Hero had ended with the fear of a rival, and Leander's letter, which is in many places close to the Ovidian original,⁴¹ reassures her of his love and his own suffering, stressing how he looks for her signal and wishes for a still night. This prompts him to recall the first time he swam and how her light gave him strength, how she received him and gave him a garment. He too will not describe the night they spent together until wakened at dawn by Hero's nurse, but he does mention her tears and his misery as he left.

The gods play no role here. The whole is presented in a medieval Christian context, so that only the good Lord, who knows the secrets of all hearts, can know Leander's suffering ("das wiß allain got der gut/ dem alleu hertzen sint wol kunt", 274f). God is invoked directly several times throughout the piece, replacing Boreas when Leander complains of the troubled skies. Leander's letter ends, however, with the declaration, prompted by Hero's fears and his own intense longing, that he will swim that night even if he should die. The reversal of the order of the letters is made crucial by the assertion that he will come that very night:

40 Fechter, *Lateinische Dichtkunst* offers a clear picture of the medieval aspects and expansions. Bartsch, *Albrecht von Halberstadt und Ovid im Mittelalter*, pp. xxxiv–xxxvi also discusses the poem, voicing the idea that the poet's knowledge of Ovid was not immediate. He refers also to Heinrich's *Crône*, *Flamenca*, Dante, and Dirk Potter. His comments on a putative French poem (p. xxxvi) are unclear.

41 See Fechter, *Lateinische Dichtkunst*, p. 194–7 for detailed parallels; in my "Bearbeitungen", p. 235f. I argue for the importance of the reversed order of the letters.

Min trut nim min noch hi-nacht war
 So kom ich das ist ain sicher ding
 Doch ob mir misseling
 Dar an, vnd ich sterb so gedenk min
 Laß dir min sel enpholen sin. (290–4)

(My love, look out for me tonight, I shall come to you for certain, but if I fail and die in the attempt, then think of me — I commend my soul to you.)

The letter is sent (we assume that Hero receives it during the daytime), and that night Leander sets out. The poet interjects a complaint to God and to love, in the service of which so many men have perished, with an extended generalised observation that the delights of love have often blinded men, causing them to risk their life for a woman's affection, as happens, he tells us, here. Leander sets out in stormy winds and lightning, battered by the waves and blinded by the rain so that he cannot see the lamp (which is therefore diminished as a motif). He considers turning back, but his arms are too weary, and he begs God for mercy. He becomes so tired that he regrets ever having seen Hero. Aware that he will drown, however, he apostrophizes her, saying that his greatest loss is that he will not see her again. His last comments are a prayer to God to receive his soul, and he perishes. This resembles the Admont prose tale to an extent, and here too the pair are not explicitly united in death. The poet, however, says that he will not indulge in mourning for Leander, and offers instead a sententious piece of general advice: take more care "Vnd nit volgent tumbem mut/ Der euch vil dick schaden tut" (396f. and do not indulge in stupid wilfulness, which can very often lead you into harm).

When Hero gets word that Leander's body is floating on the sea, she collapses and dies: her death is abrupt, and it is not entirely clear whether she sees his body. Her death comes about from her great loyalty to him, so that different lessons seem to be drawn from the two deaths: folly is to be avoided, but loyalty praised, because — as the last two lines of the story proper inform us — that is in short supply nowadays. This particular *laudatio temporis acti* is found elsewhere in medieval German texts. The pair are not explicitly joined in death, Leander did not blame her in advance, and she does not assume the guilt for his death.

The remaining eighty-plus lines contain a series of somewhat rambling thoughts on love based on this tale.⁴² The key is that love of this intensity can

42 Hansmann's translation into modern German prudently omits this whole section. See my "Bearbeitungen", p. 238 on the style and clarity of the conclusion.

be too much of a burden. The criticism, however, seems to be of the demands made by Hero. The poet's own lady, he claims, would not make such demands of him. Although good old-fashioned loyalty is praiseworthy, the overriding message still seems to be a warning against an excess of devotion, which is seen as folly (as in the *Ovide moralisé*) on Leander's part, with an implicit criticism of Hero for asking too much. This is underlined by the ordering and emphases of the letters, by having Hero's letter arriving first and ending with a provocation, and by turning Leander's into the direct response that he will take the risk. Some questions remain, such as the reason for the secrecy, although some material points *are* explained: Leander is physically blinded by the rain (as he is blinded in other respects) and cannot see the lamp. The gods have been removed, but although love, *Minne* (a destructive force from the start) is invoked, it is into the hands of God that the drowning Leander commends himself.⁴³

11 Giovanni Girolamo Nadal, *La Leandride* (ca 1375–80)

The authorship of the lengthy Italian poem, the longest of the medieval literary versions, by the Venetian patrician and humanist Giovanni Girolamo Nadal (or Natali, ca 1334–1382) was for a long period obscure. It was ascribed to Leonardo Giustiniani (ca 1383–1446), or seen as anonymous, or (in one of the few manuscripts) optimistically attributed to Boccaccio. Its title is also variable (*Leandreide*, *Leandreride*).⁴⁴ More than five thousand lines, 1750 Dantean

43 See Fechter, *Lateinische Dichtkunst*, p. 189 and especially his pithy summary on p. 197f. (my translation): "The tale is Ovid's, but the spirit and the style of the narrative of Hero and Leander is medieval. This little text exemplifies one of the possible ways in which the middle ages could meet the classical world".

44 Cited here from the text (as *La Leandreide* and taken as anonymous) in the collection by Carlo del Balzo, *Poesie di mille autori intorno a Dante Alighieri*, vol. 11 (Rome: Forzani, 1889), 257–456 (online). There is a modern edition: *Giovanni Girolamo Nadal, La Leandride*, ed. Emilio Lippi (Padua: Antenore, 1996). The nineteenth-century critic Emanuele Cicogna attributed the work to Giustiniani, but this was denied by Berthold Fenigstein, *Leonardo Giustiniani (ca. 1383–1446)* (Halle/Saale: Karras, 1909), pp. 74–8 (with a brief and not entirely accurate description of the work). Fenigstein does not mention Nadal, whose authorship was mooted in the early part of the twentieth century by Aldo Francesco Massera, and more recently confirmed by Roberta Meneghel, "La 'Leandride' di Giovanni Girolamo Nadal", *Italia medioevale e umanistica* 16 (1973), 163–78. Montiglio, *Hero and Leander*, has an excellent discussion of the poem, pp. 160–7 and in her conclusion. She addresses the (open) question of whether Musaios was known, p. 163, comments on the combination of Leander and Hero in the name-form *Leandreride*, and notes, p. 218, that Nadal is one of the few earlier writers to include the initial stages of the love. She also notes the geographical accuracy of this version compared to others.

tercets, are arranged in four books with a variable number of cantos (mostly of between twenty and thirty tercets and ending with a quatrain), making up seventy in all. The work seems to have been largely forgotten, possibly because of its length, which raises the legitimate and recurring question of how and whether an intrinsically tightly circumscribed plot can sustain such expansion. Other reasons might be the numerous classical references and a long literary excursus towards the end. In that excursus Dante himself introduces the author to classical Greek and Roman writers, and then to more recent Italian ones, after which the troubadour Arnaud de Mareuil presents a list of writers in Provençal in twenty-six tercets in that language.⁴⁵ This does not fit easily with the narrative, especially as it is coming towards its climax. For all that, the work introduces some new characters and offers some developments, and it has, within the terza rima form, some striking passages of dialogue. It also builds upon Ovid by having the extended courtship of the couple conducted through correspondence, the letters taken from Abydos to Sestos by an entirely new character, Leander's old nurse, Mantho.

That Hero dedicates herself to chastity in the name of a goddess (in this case to Diana, however, and not specifically as a priestess) is of some importance, since Musaios was not yet widely known, although Italy is the bridge across which his poem came into western Europe. Silvia Montiglio has pointed out that (an indirect or hearsay?) knowledge of Musaios would not have been impossible, and rightly stresses that whatever the answer, Nadal has used the concept of a self-imposed vow of chastity well. Diana does appear in Ovid, however (as Cynthia), and Leander likens Hero to Venus and to the moon-goddess in his letter. If the motif of self-imposed chastity as a barrier to the love was independently reached, devotion to Diana, as the chaste goddess, is less ambiguous than to Aphrodite.

After an introductory and detailed presentation of the locations in Asia and Europe and the naming-story of the Hellespont, we are told that Sestos has an annual festival celebrating the Greek victory over Xerxes and the Persians, Sestos itself being the port on the Dardanelles where Xerxes effectively began his campaign in Europe. Herodotos has the story of Xerxes crossing the Hellespont into Europe by a bridge of ships (*Histories* VII, 58), and this

45 Arnaud de Mareuil (Meyrveil, Marol and other variants) is less well-known than Arnaud Daniel (whom he mentions in his own list), the Provençal poet mentioned by Dante, also with some lines in Occitan (*Purgatorio* xxvi, 10–7), which Dorothy Sayers neatly translates into Scots in her version of Dante (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1955).

is echoed elsewhere in the tradition. Leander sees Hero for the first time at this festival, where she wishes to dedicate herself to Diana:

Lasciamy, padre mio, virgo et pulcella,
 Però ch'io mi ho dedicata a Diana
 Et questo il padre havea concessa a quella.

Ma sua forma mirabel, piu che humana,
 Contrariava ad questo, promittende
 Che sua dedication serebbe vana.
 Hero avea nome ... (I, 4, p. 268)

(My father, let me be a virgin maiden, for I have dedicated myself to Diana. Her father had permitted this. But her beautiful form, which was more than human, contradicted this, promising that her dedication would be in vain. Hero was her name.)

Her beauty is more than human: is this part of the underlying and involuntary hubris associated with Leander's view of Hero as a goddess? The arrows of love strike them both, and Leander makes up his mind to address her, but Hero resists. This is the last day of the festival, so that on his return to Abydos, Leander is lovelorn, something observed by his nurse, Mantho, whose role is developed very fully in the second book as a considerable departure from the classical version. She agrees to act as a go-between and take a letter declaring his love, a letter which does not (as in the *Heroides*) contain memories, of course. The nurse returns to Sestos and has a long discussion with Hero, interrupted by her father. Hero weighs up her dedication against her love, then speaks to Mantho again and reads Leander's letter. This presentation of Hero's confused state of mind is drawn out and is combined with the implications of her vows. The role of the affronted Diana is important. In Ovid, Hero wonders whether *she* might be thought unsuitable because of her birth; here Leander's nurse confronts Hero's concerns about barbarous outsiders by stressing Leander's equal nobility. Pretending that she finds the letter impious, Hero nevertheless agrees to write him a letter which Mantho will take back to Abydos, and this correspondence continues, with Leander pleading for her love in an overblown rhetorical style. The nurse dissuades Leander from going to Sestos, however, to keep the love secret. Meanwhile, Hero's own nurse is assisting and encouraging her. Part of Hero's confusion comes from her fear of the anger of Diana, to whom she had devoted her virginity (II, 22, p. 341). Mantho takes back another letter,

thinking that it is a rejection, but Leander rejoices when it is not, and proposes to come to Hero by swimming the Hellespont. Mantho then finds when she arrives once more that Hero's father and brothers have died in a plague, thus removing one impediment. Hero is delighted that Leander will come and will leave a lamp. The two nurses facilitate matters.

The first cantos of the third book celebrate the love, and then show the emotions of Hero and of Leander when he must return to Abydos, but we move rapidly into the situation of the *Heroides*. Leander is prevented from coming to Sestos, and Hero now experiences, as in Ovid, the fear that it is not the wind and waves which prevent Leander from coming, but a new love (III, 9, p. 388). Leander is frustrated by the stormy sea and Hero beset with dreams. The fourth and final book, however, opens with an invocation to love, and an astronomical excursus, but it is at this point that the author is introduced by Dante over a series of cantos to classical Greek, Latin and Italian writers, with Arnaut de Mareuil naming the Provençal writers in that language. Only in canto IX does Leander enter the sea, and in the next we are told of the (anticipated) anger of the goddess: "Diana, che era turbata contra Hero/ Et fine ad hora havea la vendetta", (Diana was disturbed [the word *turbata* is significant] against Hero and now had her revenge, IV, 10, p. 422). The seas rage and Leander drowns, thinking only of Hero, and he is taken to the infernal regions with other doomed lovers — the influence of Dante is clear at this point. Hero and her nurse find his corpse, after much weeping she too dies, and her nurse has them buried in one sepulchre. The gods, however, are not yet done. Venus supplicates Jove to have the lovers made into stars, they are taken from hell and placed in the skies.

What the poet has done is to use the device of letters to explore the uncharted development of their love. This brings with it the invention of Leander's nurse (Hero's nurse retains, by and large, the role she has elsewhere). Hero's father and brothers provide a temporary inhibiting factor, but their death in the plague (*epidemia*) opens the way to more familiar actions. The basic narrative elements occupy only a relatively small part of the poem, and the role of the lamp is also minimal. The implied conflict between Diana, the virgin goddess to whom Hero had dedicated her own virginity (wherever the motif came from), and the goddess of love, Venus, is also something new. There is no overt moralising, and the ending is more satisfactory than a simple declaration of unity in death, or even the sometimes far-fetched terrestrial metamorphoses, as they are here placed amongst the stars.⁴⁶

46 The excursus passages are far removed from modern taste, but they are not uncommon in medieval narrative. Nadal's literary section has a parallel, though it is rhetorically better

12 Dirk Potter, *Der minnen loep* 11,119–429 (Early 15th Century)

An early Dutch version of the story is included within a lengthy didactic work by the courtier Dirk Potter (1370–1428). *Der minnen loep*, ‘the course of love’ is a consideration of courtly love composed in the first decades of the fifteenth century, and our narrative is found in the second book in around four hundred rhymed lines.⁴⁷ Potter uses several works of Ovid (whom he names in the narrative), but his version of the Hero and Leander story still has some unusual elements. Further, this is not a moralised version but a courtly work.

In the opening contextualisation — located chronologically, incidentally, ‘in olden times’ — we are presented with kings in Abydos and in Sestos, on either side of the Hellespont, one with a son, Leander, and the other with a daughter, who is at this point unnamed, which is odd since we have had all the other names. Even more curiously she is later (209) named ‘Adonis’, although the name is used only once. This could be a misreading of *Heroni* in the *Heroides* title, although in Potter’s text it is at the start of a passage reflecting the letter *Hero Leandri*. Her name is not used in Ovid except in the headings, and Leander refers to her as *Sesta puella*, young woman of Sestos.⁴⁸ Whatever the explanation, it is surprising that the combination of names was unfamiliar. That they are specifically royal children, however, anticipates or is linked with the German ballad tradition. The two are burning with great love for each other. The sea, we are then told, is deep and not too wide (*diep ende niet te wijt*, 139); Leander, who is very strong, can swim across, so that their

integrated, in Gottfried von Strassburg’s *Tristan*, for example, where the poetic voice enumerates other German writers.

47 *Der minnen loep*, ed. P. Leendertz (Leiden: Mortier, 1845–7). The edition appeared in four sections published by the society for the furthering of early Dutch Literature, and the Hero and Leander section is in the second part, pp. 127–39, book 11, 119–429. Most of our text is also available in Johannes Franck, *Mittelniederländische Grammatik mit Lesestücken und Glossar* ([2nd ed. 1910] repr. Arnhem: Gysbers and Van Loon, 1967), pp. 252–5 (= Leendertz 11, 119–394). On Dirk Potter, see A. M. J. van Buuren, *Der minnen loep van Dirck Potter. Studie over een middelnederlandse Ars Amandi* (Utrecht: HES, 1979) and his chapter “Dirck Potter, a Medieval Ovid”, in: *Medieval Dutch Literature in its European Context*, ed. E. Kooper (Cambridge: CUP, 1994), pp. 151–67; Fritz Pieter van Oostrom, *Court and Culture: Dutch Literature 1350–1450*, transl. Arnold J. Pomeranz (Berkeley, Los Angeles and Oxford: U. California P., 1992 [original version in Dutch, 1987]); I have discussed the narrative in my “Bearbeitungen”, but would now distance myself somewhat from the comparisons with the Middle High German text, which depends far more on Ovid than I suggested there. Van Buuren, *Studie*, p. 245f., comments on my paper. See now also Montiglio, *Hero and Leander*, pp. 142–7.

48 I suggest this in my “Bearbeitungen”, p. 239, with n35f. Jellinek, *Sage*, p. 8 wonders about (and properly rejects) a link with Musaios’s festival of Adonis.

love can remain concealed from those who regularly gather on the shore. This is a clear echo of the Leander-letter, but no further details are given of why concealment is necessary. The medieval courtly love tradition postulates spies, however, who are always on the lookout for clandestine lovers.

Hero, we are informed, has a wise (male) servant by whom she could send a message to Leander, after which he himself would then swim across, another variation on the issue of delivery. One night there is a storm, which causes Leander to decide not to swim, but it lasts for so long, and his desire is so great, that he changes his mind. The storm is so fierce, however, that he simply cannot survive:

Die storm was zwaer, die stroem liep groot.

...

Die waghen sloeghen hem inden mont
Ende hij verdranck in corter stont. (190–6)

(The storm was heavy, the waters running high ... the waves struck into his mouth and he soon drowned.)

The guiding lamp is absent and there is not much of the Leander-letter in this version. That the final image resembles Musaios to an extent is in this case certainly coincidental.

Ironically, at this point Hero is writing a letter to Leander, as, we are then told, “Ovidius ... In epistolen heeft bescreven” (Ovid has described in the *Heroides*, 204f.). Where she is, the water is calm. Ovid’s letter from Hero is followed closely, even if there is a deliberate irony in that the death of Leander has by this time already happened.⁴⁹ She asks him why he has stayed away for long, recalls how she cares for him when he comes to her tired and wet, and how “Ic druck di vriendelic in minen armen,/ Dijn schone lijff te verwarmen” (225f., I clasp you lovingly in my arms to warm your beautiful body). Her speculations on his absence condense Ovid: is he prevented by his father, by illness, by some hindrance, “Off nuwe minne? des en ghelove ic niet” (250, or a new love? But I don’t believe that). That aspect of her anxiety is dismissed at once; she is secure in her trust of him and does not dwell on a point which is emphasised elsewhere. Now, and out of Ovidian sequence, she enumerates all the activities that “you men” can indulge in to pass the time, while she must sit alone with

49 Jellinek, *Sage*, p. 8 considers the letter pointless, a view found also in Hilde Kommerell, *Das Volkslied “Es waren zwei Königskinder”* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1931), p. 57. Kommerell discusses Potter’s version and that in Middle High German.

her nurse, Romadis.⁵⁰ Hero's state of mind — imagining she hears something and running to the door, only to return crushed — is well done, and her fears are all to do with the tempestuous sea. Desperate as she is for Leander to come, "Ic beyde liever noch een jaer/ Dan di misschiede van een haer" (319f. I would rather wait another year than that a hair of your head should be harmed). The letter is sent by the messenger, but it is never read: "Mer nyemant en heeft den brief ontfanen" (336, but no one ever received the letter).

The messenger cannot find Leander, and it is assumed in Abydos that a goddess has taken him for herself. In Sestos Hero herself goes to the shore with her nurse and they find Leander's body. Hero complains to all the gods — this is not a Christianized narrative — and kisses his dead body. Her despair is strikingly put: "Dicke riep sy: "o wy! o wach!/ Wat sal ic doen? off waer? off hoe?" (372f. again and again she cried, alas, alack; what shall I do? or where? or how?). She sends her nurse to organize people to fetch the body, and when she has gone, Hero *als een rasende wijff* (383), like a madwoman, pulls the body towards deep water and throws herself into the sea.

Potter's judgement is positive: this is an example of constancy, of lovers with complete faith in one another:

O edel vrouwe ende goede man,
Hier salmen truwelik deyncken an.
Hier liet truwe truwe bliken. (395–7)

(O noble lady and good man, one should think with constancy about this.
Here constancy was shown to constancy.)

The concluding thought has echoes of the comments on Saul and Jonathan in 11 Samuel (11 Kings) 1, 23:

Die wile si leefden waren sy
Onverscheiden ende wandels vry:
Dus sijn si inder lesten noot
Onghescheiden ghebleven doot. (399–402)

(They were inseparable and constant in their lives, and remained that way to the end, undivided in their death.)

⁵⁰ Hero may have an odd name but it is interesting that the nurse has a name at all, *onser moeder Romadis*, later Roemadis. Presumably "our mother Romadis" is an honorific, and she is certainly described as *voetster*, 'nurse', although in later ballads Hero's mother does appear in a similar but more sinister role.

Love is applauded as an essentially courtly *truwe*, loyalty, rather than condemned as a folly of excess. The contrast with the Middle High German version is striking. In terms of the tradition, only one letter is given, though Potter seems aware that there was a correspondence and even refers to Ovid. The tragedy is underlined, *pace* Jellinek, however, by that ironic “but no-one read the letter”.

13 Christine de Pizan, *Le Livre de la Cité des Dames*, II, 58 (ca 1405)

There has in recent years been an increased interest in the work of Christine de Pizan (or Pisan) as an early female professional writer, and especially in her *Book of the City of Ladies*. Christine, who was born in Venice in around 1363–5, but who lived and worked in France, where she died in about 1430, produced the French prose *Livre de la Cité des Dames*,⁵¹ which survives in a substantial number of manuscripts (she supervised her own scriptorium), some of them very fine and belonging to important families. One (London, British Library Harley 4431) was presented in 1413 to Queen Isabeau, wife of and regent for Charles VI of France and was perhaps written or corrected by Christine herself. The work is a long one, and it differs considerably from its most notable forerunner (the terms ‘source’ and ‘model’ are at best misleading), Boccaccio’s *De mulieribus claris*. Boccaccio focused upon the lives of famous (or notorious) women, whereas Christine’s emphasis is upon good or noble women, and she ends with an array of saints. Boccaccio does not include Hero.

⁵¹ The relevant section is II, 58, ‘of Hero’. An edition was for many years available principally in the doctoral dissertations of Monika Lange (Hamburg, 1974) and Maureen C. Curnow (Vanderbilt, 1975). See now the text and Spanish translation by Marie-José Lemarchand, *Cristina de Pizan, La Ciudad de las Damas* (Madrid: Siruela, 1995); in French *Christine de Pizan, Le Livre de la Cité des Dames*, ed. and trans. Thérèse Moreau and Eric Hicks (Paris: Stock, 2005); and in Italian Patrizia Caraffi, *Christine de Pizan, La Citta de les Dames* (Rome: Carocci, 2016). There are modern English translations by Earl Jeffrey Richards (London: Pan, 1982), with a useful introduction (see pp. xxv–viii on the relationship to Boccaccio); and by Rosalind Brown-Grant (Harmondsworth: Penguin, new ed. 2004). On Christine, see Edith Yenal, *Christine de Pizan. A Bibliography* (Metuchen, NJ and London: Scarecrow, 2nd ed. 1989); M. Zimmermann and D. de Rentiis, *New Approaches to Christine de Pizan* (Berlin and New York: de Gruyter, 1994); Barbara K. Altmann and Deborah L. McGrady, *Christine de Pizan: A Casebook* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003). See also Tracy Adams, “État Présent. Christine de Pizan”, *French Studies* 71 (2017), 388–400, with an up-to-date bibliography, and comments on the manuscripts, some of which have been digitised (see p. 391). Christine produced in 1405 a follow-up volume with the title *Le Livre des Trois Vertus* or *Le Trésor de la Cité des Dames*; this is a quite different work.

Christine makes references in other writings to Hero and Leander. One in *Le livre du debat de deux amants* (the debate of two lovers) is brief, and that in the *Epistre d'Othea* of 1399, the letter of Othea to Hector, stresses the excessive nature of the love. Of greater interest is the fact that the third of her *Cent ballades*, one hundred ballads, is devoted to the theme, a very early example of a lyric poem on the subject. Three stanzas tell the story with great economy (Hero lives in a castle in Abydos, however), and the death of Leander arouses pity. Their joint death demonstrates the power of love. The four-line summary stresses how great love can turn even the wisest into a fool: “grant amour fait un fol du plus sage”.⁵²

Christine's *City of Ladies* — by a woman in praise of women — sets out specifically to counter misogynistic writings, and to plead for the value and nobility of women. It centres upon a discussion between the narrator and the figures of Reason, Rectitude and Justice about different kinds of women who will take their place in the allegorical city, in what we might now call a (literary) safe space. The narrative of Hero and Leander appears in a section in which Rectitude emphasises by examples the faithfulness of women in love. The whole section has a slightly awkward feel, since it includes not only Dido, but also Medea. These are followed by Thisbe and Hero, where Christine's source is clearly, if not always accurately, Ovid; and finally, Ghismonda, and then Lisabetta, both from Boccaccio's *Decameron* (IV, 1 and 5, the latter Keats's ‘pot of basil’ tale).

The heading is “of Hero,” and the brief version of the narrative seems initially to focus upon her great love for Leander, the (slightly convoluted) implication being that her love drove him to face danger so that she should not be exposed to shame. We are however, as in Ovid, given no details. Leander regularly swims (naked, we are reminded) across the Hellespont to, rather than from, Abydos, where in this version *Hero* lives (Sestos is not mentioned). Hero holds up a lighted torch to guide him on the dark winter nights, picking up the defiance of winter expressed by Ovid's Leander. At all events, they continue the relationship in this manner for some years, until Fate becomes jealous of their happiness.

The most basic element remains: on one such winter's night, when the weather and violent sea have kept them apart for some days — another echo

52 Maurice Roy, *Oeuvres poétiques de Christine de Pisan* (Paris: Didot, 1884–96), I, 3–4 (poem III, v. 27, cited). It is translated in Montiglio *Hero and Leander*, p. 131. Montiglio has a perceptive discussion of Christine, pp. 129–40, stressing how Hero is in general relieved of any blame for the death of Leander. Fig. 3.1 of Montiglio's book is an illustration from the *Epistre d'Othea* in BL Harley 4431, the ‘Queen's Manuscript’, showing Hero hurling herself into the sea onto the dead Leander.

of Ovid — there is a storm in which Leander perishes. More complex here is the question of the torch, which seems not to have gone out, so that Leander's death is simply caused by the power of the sea. He sets out after seeing Hero's torch, taking this as a sign that she is expecting him, and thinking that he would be cowardly not to swim. Christine, echoing the mental torments of Ovid's Hero, lets her set up the torch just in case Leander decides to take the risk, although she is afraid of putting him in danger. The waves sweep Leander out, he drowns, and on the following morning Hero sees his body, swims out to embrace it, and dies. She (and presumably also Leander) died, we are told, from having loved too much. Leander is driven by love, by the desire to keep Hero from shame, and by the fear of being thought a coward. Hero's torch, however, has contributed to his death.

This tale sits uncomfortably within the in any case heterogeneous grouping. Hero is ostensibly placed in the foreground, especially for the second part of the tale, but the effect of this is that much of the blame for the tragedy seems to rest upon her as much as the jealousy of fate. Leander, concerned in any case to protect Hero's reputation, took the light to be an invitation, and why Hero lit it is a question that Christine does not answer well. Hero's place in the City of Ladies, the fortress of rightful esteem for women, seems to rest upon less solid arguments than are put forward even for the notorious enchantress Medea, who is presented, without reference to her other deeds, simply as being more faithful to Jason than he was to her, and as desirous of protecting him. As with Guillaume de Machaut's earlier debate, separating these lovers is awkward.

Christine's work was from the number of manuscripts a popular one, not just in France. It was translated in Bruges in about 1475 into Middle Dutch as *Het boec van de stede der vrouwen*, which survives in an illustrated manuscript (now London, BL Additional 20698),⁵³ and into English by Bryan Anslay (d. 1536), printed in 1521 as *The boke of the cyte of ladyes*. As a printed book the work would have enjoyed greater circulation, and the significance for women readers of Christine's text in the early modern period has rightly been stressed.⁵⁴

53 Orlando S. H. Lie, Martine Meuwese, Mark Aussems and Hermina Joldersma, *Christine de Pizan in Bruges* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2015).

54 Printed in London by Henry Pepwell, 1521. It has been edited (with the French text) by Hope Johnston, *The Boke of the Cyte of Ladyes by Christine de Pizan* (Tempe: Arizona Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies, 2014), and Anslay's text is also available online through the Early English Books/Text Creation Partnership. On its importance, see Mary Beth Long, "A Medieval French Book in an Early Modern English World: Christine de Pisan's *Livre de la Cité des Dames* and Women Readers in the Age of Print", *Literature Compass* 9 (2012), 521–37.

What their reactions might have been to the specific case of Hero, on the other hand, is harder to guess.

14 **Joan Roïç de Corella, *La istòria de Leànder y Hero* (Later 15th Century)**

The version of the tale by the Catalan writer Joan Roïç (Rois) de Corella (ca 1435–97) of Valencia stands at the very end of the medieval period. He was a prolific poet and also a theological writer, and he was also interested in Ovid. He produced a prose novella on Hero and Leander (naming them, as do many Iberian versions, with the young man first).⁵⁵ His version includes several developments of key elements, perhaps most particularly in the role of the nurse, and in the extended pathos of the death-scene of Hero.

Hero and Leander fall in love at first sight, but difficulties in the pursuit of their relationship force Leander to leave Sestos for a long period, during which other suitors pursue and are rejected by Hero, even though her family favours one of them. She confides in her nurse, who eventually arranges for Leander to swim across the dangerous sea. He does so several times, but, as in Christine de Pizan and elsewhere, fortune/fate is affronted by his behaviour, he is forced to fight against the elements, unable to see the light from Hero's tower, and is drowned. The final scene is greatly extended and especially graphic, with a rather different suicide. Hero sees Leander's body from the top of her tower, tears her garments and rushes down (by way of the secret door through which he had entered), and throws herself upon his body. Her tears mingle with the sea, she is unable to speak, she kisses his cold mouth and opens his eyes to kiss them, then proclaims their epitaph: *amor cruel*, cruel love, has joined them in life and now they shall be joined in one tomb. Then, having said these words, again with many tears (a dominant feature of the whole scene), she draws the dagger (*copagorja*) from Leander's scabbard (he was therefore not naked on this occasion), places the handle over his heart and the point to her own, and

55 *Joan Rois de Corella. The Story of Leander and Hero*, ed. Antonio Cortijo Ocaña and Josep-Lluís Martos (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: Benjamins, 2016). The volume contains not only an edition, but translations of the text into English and several other languages. There is an introduction, pp. 1–17 on the story in general, with a bibliography. On p. 1 there is an illustration of one of the Hero and Leander coins from Abydos. There is an earlier edition of the text by Ramon Miquel i Planas, *Obres de Joan Roïç de Corella* (Barcelona: Miquel Rius, 1913), and another more recent one by Josep Lozano and Magda Añon, *Joan Roís de Corella, Leandre i Hero. Història de Josep* (Alcira: Bromera, 1998). See Montiglio, *Hero and Leander*, pp. 167–74.

falls upon it, urged on by the same *amor cruel* that she has already named. The separation and especially the exaggerated and somewhat melodramatic⁵⁶ conclusion make this version into a love-tragedy in which the pair are not criticised, and the villains are external forces: fortune and, ultimately, cruel — but not foolish — love.

15 Giovanni Francesco Straparola da Caravaggio, *Le piacevoli notti*
VII/2 (1551–3)

The Italian writer known as Straparola (ca 1485–1558), whose forenames appear also as Gianfrancesco and Zoan, came from Caravaggio to Venice, and is known as a collector and presenter of anecdotes and fairy-tales, notably in his prose collection *Le piacevoli notti*, pleasant nights, which is arranged along the lines of Boccaccio's *Decameron*, with tales on different nights and interspersed comments. While strictly speaking a post-medieval work, there are links with Boccaccio, and the ecclesiastical context of this version has some echoes of the Admont prose piece. The second tale for the seventh night is clearly a version of the tale of Hero and Leander, but one which is strikingly different because it is the woman who swims to her lover, a man who has dedicated himself, this time to the contemplation of his sins. The names and location are changed, and this is the story of Malgherita Spolatina and her lover, the hermit Teodoro; the setting is Ragusa (Dubrovnik) and an island off the Dalmatian coast.⁵⁷

An initial moralising context is given for the story: this is an example of how love can lead to irrational desires and derange the mind. It is, therefore, very clearly a warning. Teodoro the pious hermit lives on an island off Ragusa but comes there to beg for food. He encounters Malgherita Spolatina, who falls in love with him and is bold enough to declare this. He resists, but then gives way and they agree that she will swim out to his hermitage if he leaves a guiding light. Her forwardness matches several of Boccaccio's young women, but the swimming, after which she is dried by the hermit before they make love, echoes Ovid. As with other texts, fortune wishes to put a stop to their happiness. There

56 The introduction to the Cortijo Ocaña and Martos edition, p. 6 refers to the bombastic style of the whole. The introduction also note parallels, p. 11, n. 8, with the death of Lucretia.

57 Giovan Francesco Straparola, *Le piacevoli notti*, ed. Giuseppe Rua (Bari: Laterza, 1927), pp. 358–64; *The Nights of Straparola*, translated by W. G. Waters (London: Lawrence and Bullen, 1894), 11, 51–6 (both online). The Waters translation has illustrations by E. R. Hughes, including one of the drowned, naked Hero-figure. It has been noted already that Lafcadio Hearn refers to a Japanese version of the tale in which the woman swims.

is no real religious dimension, and the eremitic Teodoro is not actually a monk or priest. One night the swimmer is spotted by some fishermen, who tell her brothers, one of whom goes to the hermit by boat at night and asks for shelter. Meanwhile the other brothers place a light on a drifting boat, designed to lead her astray, and she duly drowns. Her body is washed up on the island, and the hermit weeps bitterly over her, but does not commit suicide himself. Instead he buries the girl, and no-one knows what has become of her. Thus, we are told, her honour and that of the brothers is preserved. The justification of murder as a drastic move to prevent the dishonour that is often implicit but unexplained in other versions is extreme, and the reversal of gender-roles and the sexually aggressive Malgherita are surprising, but small touches from the classical narratives are still there. The opening moral, though, is that of the *Ovide moralisé*, that love can be a madness.

16 Medieval Musaios: Niketas Eugenianos and Giovanni Grasso

Although Ovid is the principal source in the west, the poem by Musaios had its influence in Greek in the middle ages. Silvia Montiglio has indicated the fairly large number of Byzantine writers who seem to allude to Musaios's text or at least to the tale. Most of the allusions adduced are relatively slight, however, some particularly so, and hence serve mainly to confirm familiarity. There is, for example, a reference in an anonymous work on poetics, and one might well expect there to be more examples of this kind in Latin as well as in Greek.⁵⁸ Only two relatively short medieval Greek metrical versions really merit separate attention.

The story is re-told in seventeen lines tucked away in the medieval Greek romantic verse novel *Drosilla and Charikles* by Niketas Eugenianos in the twelfth century.⁵⁹ We are given the final scenes of the story in what is essentially an aside. Leander is presented as the unfortunate lover of Hero — it is assumed that we know about the swimming, and Abydos and Sestos are named — who

58 Färber, *Musaios*, includes some of these brief references. See Montiglio, *Hero and Leander*, p. 179; for the others, see pp. 180–5 and 191–3, with her comment p. 181 that more could be listed. One later romance considered in detail by Montiglio refers to a statue of Leander.

59 Färber includes the relevant Greek text with a German translation, *Musaios*, p. 84f. Niketas's *Drosilla and Charikles* is in nine books, and the passage is in VI, 475–88. The whole text has been translated into English more than once, by Joan B. Burton, *Drosilla and Charikles. A Byzantine Novel by Niketas Eugenianos* (Mundelein, IL: Bolchazy Carducci, 2004) and by Elizabeth Jeffreys, *Four Byzantine Novels* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2012). See Montiglio, *Hero and Leander*, pp. 186–91.

drowned when the lamp was blown out, after which Hero threw herself from her tower. Niketas goes slightly further than Musaios at the end of the tale with the not unfamiliar optimistic claim that the tragic ending is happy in another way, namely that the pair are at least joined forever in a single grave. The fatal breath of wind is apostrophized twice (*o pneumatos*) at the end, as having extinguished the lamp, their love, and the two protagonists.

Silvia Montiglio has drawn attention to a short dialogue poem by Giovanni Grasso, which she categorizes as “the most original, albeit not the most artistic, medieval rewriting of the legend”,⁶⁰ and indeed it is more of a sequel to Musaios than the version of Niketas Eugenianos, which may have influenced it. The work is in Greek, though from the region of Otranto in southern Italy in the thirteenth century, from which, as Montiglio points out, one of the earliest extant manuscripts of Musaios comes; her discussion is nicely and accurately headed “and they lived happily ever after”. The setting is in the world of the dead, where Hero and Leander explain to an interlocutor why they acted as they did. The familiar open questions (at least, some of them) are posed directly, then, and the protagonists give us answers. Leander dared to brave the wild sea at night so often because of his love and the force of Hero’s beauty. When asked if his death would not have been enough, Hero complains that she fell upon his body so that she could remain with Leander. There is love and desire in the underworld, she tells us, and the pair can enjoy their love without fear either of their parents or of the sea. The piece is the realisation, a first-hand confirmation by the principals themselves, of those optimistic comments at the end of so many versions in the western tradition. They lie together in Musaios, are regularly buried in one grave, and the poets (and occasionally the protagonists themselves) look forward to their union in the Elysian Fields, while sometimes they are transformed into something else and remain together that way. Here they love happily ever after in what, as Montiglio points out, is not a Christian afterlife. We are told what motivated Leander, what caused Hero’s suicide, and even, briefly, about the parental obstacle to their love.

Whether or not it was known in any form to the Venetian Nadal, Musaios’s work in Greek and Latin was published by Aldus Manutius in the 1490s, and the reception of the story in the west changed. There are further brief allusions to the story, however, which are linked with the discovery and dissemination

60 *Hero and Leander*, pp. 200–3. She provides a text in English on p. 201, and it is in Silvio Mercati, “Deux poésies dialogiques sur les fables d’Héro et Léandre et d’Apollon et Daphné (du codex Ambrosien grec 277)”, *Byzantinoslavica* 9 (1947–8), 3–8 and in his *Collectanea Byzantina* (Bari: Dedalo libri, 1970), II, 411–8. Montiglio, to whom gratitude is due for making known this little text (which is not in Färber), underlines the difference between the view of the (non-Christian) afterlife here and that in western versions.

of Musaios in Italy. One is from 1494 by the renaissance Greek scholar Markos Musuros (1470–1517), who was associated with Manutius, and at whose death the Italian physician Giovanni Baptista Monte (Montanus, 1498–1551) translated Musaios into Latin. Another is by Demetrios Dukas (Cretensis) in 1514, who notes that Hero and Leander were just mortals, but were made immortal by Musaios.⁶¹

17 Conclusion

Versions of the story in the Middle Ages may be independent or included in a broader context, but most carry a moral, variously placed. The French *Ovide moralisé* and many others present the narrative, and then add a separate moral, a technique that will be seen again, as when Hans Sachs in the sixteenth century tacks on a somewhat negative and frankly weak conclusion of half-a-dozen lines, having told the tale itself positively, with vigour and interest. This situation arises, perhaps, because the story is known to be from pre-Christian antiquity and felt to be separate from (Christian) moralising. Where the antiquity of the tale is *not* stressed (or where its roots were perhaps not even known), and especially when the tale has been adapted, the moralising can be integral. The Admont prose text provides the best illustration of this, representing also a Christian parallel to Leander's calling in vain upon the gods. The love is reprehensible, and he is not saved from drowning, but the lovers are at least saved spiritually. The feel of this version is quite different, precisely because it does not play on prior knowledge of the tale, so that it is a Christianization, rather than a moralisation, which implies distancing from the narrative. At the end of the period, the *Decameron*-like fable of Straparola is comparable with the Admont prose, with the unnamed male protagonist a hermit, though the story has been changed radically.

In the medieval texts the morals, especially those that are simply added on, can feel awkward in the implicit conflict between a tale told because it was worth telling, and an instruction of what is to be learnt from it. While many of the medieval versions (down to Straparola) are moralised to some extent, however, there are some which use the narrative as a more positive example of perfect and constant love. The classical tale can be approached in terms of Christian morality, or it may take its place in the annals of courtly love. Even in

61 Both are cited as early as in the work of Ristelhuber, *De Herus et Leandri historia*, p. 62, and Färber, *Musaios* has both passages, p. 86f. See Montiglio, *Hero and Leander*, pp. 209–12 on Musuros and p. 208 on Dukas, as well as on the editions of Musaios.

simple lists of famous lovers, things can go either way: folly or faithfulness unto death. Only the attempts by Guillaume de Machaut and by Christine de Pizan to laud Hero as the most faithful or most suffering of the pair are not entirely successful: the pair cannot be separated.

An interesting comparison may be made between the Admont Marian miracle and the final cantos of Nadal's *Leandride*. In most versions (there are a few later exceptions and in Giovanni Grasso they are indeed present in Elysium), there is no actual supernatural intervention shown after the deaths of Hero and Leander, whatever hopes may have been expressed. In the Admont text, however, the actual intervention of a divine being during and after Leander's death — in this case the Virgin Mary — sends him to heaven, whilst Hero is reformed as a result, and is presumably also saved. In the *Leandride* the dead lovers, having been subjected to the wrath of Diana, are taken by a divine being, Venus, and placed amongst the stars. Both endings fill out the notion that they really *are* united in death, and those two endings are not too far apart.

Heroical Poems: the Renaissance and After

*Dígame el que conozca
a Vénus y á Cupido
si es más cruel la madre
o es más cruel el hijo.*



Vernacular translations of the *Heroides*, mostly into verse, continue into the renaissance and beyond, now of course also appearing in print. Translations of Musaios — itself in print after 1494 — also begin to appear, albeit the Grammarian continued to be confused with his legendary namesake. Comparing and assessing the extremely numerous translations and adaptations of Ovid and later of Musaios in any detail would be daunting, although comments may be made on particularly noteworthy examples, especially if they have influenced independent versions. It is, indeed, often difficult to draw a line between ostensible translations of Ovid or Musaios and free adaptations of the narrative.

1 Translations of the *Heroides*

The letters, put into Greek by the Byzantine writer Maximus Planudes in the thirteenth century, and other medieval vernaculars in the West, were translated into a wide range of languages from the sixteenth century onwards.¹ Most are in verse, although the classical metre is not usually imitated, and the form chosen — terza rima in Italian or Spanish, for example, or heroic couplets in English — will always affect the rendering. The medieval Italian texts by Ceffi and Monticelli were both in print by the end of the fifteenth century, and that by the spurious Carlo Figiovanni was published in Venice in

¹ See Bolgar, *Classical Heritage*, pp. 530–2 (on the earliest period), and *Ovid Renewed. Ovidian Influences on Literature and Art from the Middle Ages to the Twentieth Century*, ed. Charles Martindale (Cambridge: CUP, 1988).

1532. An Italian verse translation by Remigio Nannini of Florence, known as Remigio Fiorentino (ca 1521–81) first appeared in Venice in 1555 and was still in print in the nineteenth century, while another in terza rima by Camillo Camilli appeared in 1587, the letters prefaced with a prose *argomento*. Leander's makes the familiar point of the two cities in Asia and Europe.²

In French the first full *Heroides*-translation, that in rhymed verse by Octavien de Saint-Gelais, found its way into print after 1500, and another full text appeared (in stages after 1550) by Charles Fontaine, with an edition of the whole in Paris in 1580. There are several translations of selected letters, and a tradition establishes itself in French of imitations, sometimes parodistic.³ The German metrical translation by Johann Georg Karl (Carl) Schlüter (1700–1799), published by Schwickert in Leipzig in 1795, is relatively late,⁴ but the first translation of the *Heroides* into Spanish is of special interest in that it provides a link with the new world. Diego Mejia (Mexia) de Fernagil (1565–1634), who worked in Peru, translated the text in 1596, and it appeared in Seville in 1608. His version is close to the original, and the use of tercets is effective. Leander's erotic evasion in his letter that what happened in their night of love was known only to themselves, the tower and the guiding lamp is neatly done:

Lo demás que pasó, la noche amada,
nosotros y la torre lo sabemos,
y la luz que es farol de mi jornada.⁵

In English there is a long tradition of translations. The *Heroycall Epistles*, published in 1567 by George Turberville (ca 1540–1597), are in various

2 *Epistole d'Ovidio tradotte da Remigio Fiorentino* (Pisa: Niccolò Capurro, 1818); Camillo Camilli, *L'Epistole d'Ovidio tradotte in terza rima* (Venice: Ciotti, 1587). Later versions appeared in ottava rima by Marc'Antonio Valdera (Venice, 1604) and in terza rima by Angelo Rodolfini (Macerata, 1682) and Giulio Bussi (Viterbo, 1703), as well as a translation by Abate Cesare Frassoni (Modena, 1751). Of interest is the combination: *Epistolae Eroïdi di Ovidio Nasone ed il canto di Museo sopra Erone e Leandro trasportati in verso italiano* published in Venice by Angelo Pasinello in 1757, translated by Marcaurelio Soranzo.

3 See on both forms Christine Scollen, *The Birth of the Elegy in France, 1500–1550* (Geneva: Droz, 1967), with material on Hero and Leander, p. 22f. On the major translations, see Patrick White, "Ovid's *Heroides* in Early Modern French Translation", *Translation and Literature* 13 (2004), 165–80. Ovid's epistles were imitated in English by Michael Drayton in *England's Heroicall Epistles* (1597–1619) and later by John Oldmixon (1673–1742) in his *Amores Britannici* in 1703.

4 There are numerous German versions of individual letters over the following centuries, such as that by Otto, Graf von Haugewitz, of *Heroides* xviii, *Leander Heroni*, in the first issue of the journal *Eunomia* in Vienna in May 1804 (pp. 354–7).

5 It appeared in the *Primera parte del parnaso Antartico* in Seville in 1608. The two letters are included in Moya del Baño, *El Tema*, the passage cited on p. 231.

different metres, including fourteen-syllable lines, a text which has (quite correctly) been described as “lumbering”.⁶ W[ye] S[altonstall] (1602–1640) translated *Ovid's Heroicall Epistles* into heroic couplets and dedicated them semi-ironically “To the Vertuous Ladies, and Gentlewomen of England”; it was published with twenty-four illustrations in London in 1626 and reprinted several times in that century. His introduction to the Leander letter gives the width of the Hellespont at seven furlongs, invokes Pliny on the Europe and Asia division, and cites and translates Martial. His rendering of Leander's prophetic accusation (*Leander Heroni* 199f.) is neat: “Then thou wilt weep on it, and say ‘was I/ Was the occasion that this man did dye’.”⁷ John Sherburne (fl. 1617–50) published a translation in London in 1639, but probably the best-known of the early modern English versions is that edited by John Dryden, *Ovid's Epistles Translated by Several Hands*, printed by Jacob Tonson in London in 1680.⁸ The Hero and Leander letters were translated into heroic couplets by the sometime poet laureate, Nahum Tate (1652–1715), abridged and omitting much of the mythological material. This might in some respects be considered an improvement, but any abridgement can lead to an emphasis on some points (such as the blame placed on Leander's parents for the need for secrecy) and a diminution of others (such as the implicit blame on Hero when Leander dies). There are good lines, of course, as in Leander's evasion, once again, as he recalls “Delights that ought not, cannot be exprest”. Other lines are impressive without being very close to the original, as when Hero complains of the necessary secrecy of their love (“vel timidus famae cedere vellet amor” *Hero Leandro*, 172): “Our Love's our own, which yet we take by stealth,/ Like Midnight Misers from their hidden wealth”. But it does not always work. Leander recalls (103–4) how Hero covered him with her garments when he emerged from the sea: “Forgetting how your too officious care/ Left thee (my tend'rest part) expos'd to

6 C. S. Lewis, *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century, Excluding Drama* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1954), p. 252f. makes clear that Turberville is not a first-rate poet, but the adjective is from the entry by David Hopkins on Ovid in *The Oxford Guide to Literature in English Translation*, ed. Peter France (Oxford: OUP 2000), p. 520. The poet's surname has various spellings.

7 Cited from the 1663 edition (London: Gilbertson), p. 138, online in the Michigan Early English Books project. See on the ironic aspects of Saltonstall's version Susan Wiseman, “Perfectly Ovidian? Dryden's *Epistles*, Behn's ‘Oenone’, Yarico's Island”, *Renaissance Studies* 22 (2008), 417–33, see p. 426.

8 The volume was regularly reprinted and is available online in the *Early English Books and the Eighteenth-Century Collections Online*. See Harriet Andreadis, “The Early Modern Afterlife of Ovidian Erotics: Dryden's *Heroides*”, *Renaissance Studies* 22 (2008), 401–416; she notes that versions appeared in different and augmented forms between 1680 and 1720 and provides pp. 414–7 a chart with the layout of the editions.

Air". After Dryden, several more translations appeared over the course of the next century or so, some of them tagged as inferior even in early bibliographies.⁹

It may be noted that imitations of the *Heroides* continue in neo-Latin verse by various writers, such as the Germans Helius Eobanus Hessus (Koch, 1488–1540), a writer much admired by Luther, whose letters are from *holy* women, and Jakob Bidermann (1578–1639); by the Ayrshire poet Mark Alexander Boyd (1562–1601); and by the Dutch writer Caspar Barlaeus (van Baarle, 1584–1648).

2 Translations and Paraphrases of Musaios

The first translations of Musaios are in Latin; there is one together with the Greek in the edition by Aldus Manutius in 1494–8, and another was produced later by Kaspar von Barth, who also wrote an epic on the theme. Vernacular Musaios-translations are also plentiful.¹⁰ The recent work of Paolo Eleuteri, as well as inspection of early bibliographical references-works, would permit the compilation of an enormous list of supposed translations of the Greek epyllion down to the nineteenth century, but such an exercise would need careful handling.¹¹ Once again, a change of verse-form alone can turn a vernacular

9 William Thomas Lowndes, *The Bibliographer's Manual of English Literature* (London: Pickering, 1834), III, 1385 lists a prose crib of 1746 (it reappeared in 1753 and 1767), and English versions by Stephen Barrett of 1759 ("of no merit") and James Ewen of 1787 ("a poor performance"), plus a translation by E. D. Baynes in 1818. Robert Watt's *Bibliotheca Britannica* (Edinburgh: Constable, 1824), II, 723 similarly condemns Barret ("an unhappy version") and Ewen ("a poor translation"). He adds a reference to William Pattison, *Poems*, London 1728, with a version of Leander to Hero.

10 As noted, the standard reference work is the contribution by Paolo Eleuteri in the *Catalogus Translationum*, vol. x. on Musaios. He mentions many of those noted for representative reasons here. See also the important and wide-ranging paper by Warren Boutcher, "Who Taught Thee Rhetoric to Deceive a Maid?: Christopher Marlowe's *Hero and Leander*, Juan Boscán's *Leandro* and Renaissance Vernacular Humanism", *Comparative Literature* 52 (2000), 11–52. The paper includes photographs of the illustrations in Manutius, and discusses the relationship between the versions of, or based on, Musaios by Bernardo Tasso, Marot, Boscán and Marlowe. Musaios was translated into Latin at several points, and an examination even of these translations would be interesting. Thus for example Charles Blake (1664–1730) in his *Ludus amatorius* (London: Thomas Speed 1694), a collection which also has some of *Paradise Lost* translated into Latin, as well as other works. The text is online.

11 Two such bibliographies mentioned already are those by Jacopo Maria Paitoni, *Biblioteca degli autore antichi greci, e latini volgarizzati*, with Musaios translations in vol. II (E–N) of the 1774 edition (Venice: Storti) pp. 252–4, and by William Thomas Lowndes, *The Bibliographer's Manual of English Literature* for Italian and English respectively, and for German, see Johann Friedrich Degen, *Litteratur der deutschen Uebersetzungen der*

translation into a different work, many are paraphrases at best, and they often add extra material. Musaios and Ovid, the two main classical sources are often merged into what Warren Boutcher has called “the Ovidian Musaios”, and Martial regularly joins them as well. This is not always made clear in early bibliographies.

Sometimes arbitrary decisions have to be made about which, or to what extent, individual versions of Musaios can be examined. The lengthy Spanish poem by Juan Boscán, which is based on Musaios in Latin and also uses the Martial epigram, needs in view of its extent and later influence, to be considered separately, though not a closer Spanish verse translation of 1786 by José Antonio Conde (1766–1820).¹² A further illustration of this bibliographic minefield is provided by the prose-poem *Hero and Leander* published by Carl Ehregott Mangelsdorf (1748–1802) in 1770. Although listed regularly under translations of Musaios, it is, as Mangelsdorf points out in his preface, precisely a reaction to Musaios, whose outline he tells us he has changed. His changes are radical, and the result is impressive, but its neglect may be because of the false classification. A near-contemporary translation which is close to Musaios into German verse appeared in Frankfurt/Main in 1771 by Johann Georg Schlosser (1739–99).

Italian has a similarly problematic case in the *Favola di Leandro, e d'Ero* of 1537 by the Venetian Bernardo Tasso (1493–1569), father of Torquato Tasso, which claims to be a translation of Musaios, but is effectively a paraphrase with interpolations. This was noted by Bernardino Baldi (1553–1617), whose own translation was published in 1590. Tasso's work — around seven hundred lines of hendecasyllabic blank verse — adds some elements (from Ovid), and

Griechen (Altenburg: Richter, 1798), pp. 126–37 which has sample texts. See further: Joseph William Moss, *A Manual of Classical Bibliography* (London: Simpkin and Marshall, 1825), II, 309–17, (Musaios) and 330–86 (Ovid); Friedrich Adolf Ebert, *A General Bibliographical Dictionary (from the German)* (Oxford: OUP, 1837), III, 1155f.; S(amuel) F(riedrich) W(ilhelm) Hoffmann, *Bibliographisches Lexikon der gesamten Litteratur der Griechen* (Leipzig: Böhme, 1839), II, 611f. Many of these are accessible online, as indeed are many of the original texts in digitised form. Although the early bibliographies sometimes have useful critical comments on individual works, the accuracy of the entries can be questioned, and details of some texts and authors are hard to trace. The status of others is unclear, such as the supposed German translation of Musaios by Wilhelm Sacer (1635–1699). By the time we reach the nineteenth century, popular versions appear in such series as Bohn's Library, and then, moving to the twentieth century, in the Loeb series. There are modern versions in very many modern European languages.

12 See Moya del Baño, *El Tema*, p. 37 on Conde, whose text is included in her appendix, with a modern version by Miguel Jiménez de Aquino.

it is of interest as having influenced Boscán.¹³ Plenty of others followed in Italian. *Gli amori infelici di Leandro ed Hero*, in ottava rima and also expanded, was published by Pomponio Montanari in Vicenza in 1617, and a curiosity in the tradition is the version ostensibly by René, Chevalier Milleran de Saumur, a professor of languages in Paris. *Gli Amori di Leandro, e d'Ero da Musaeo*, again in ottava rima, was published in Venice in 1709 with a dedication to Frederick IV, King of Denmark and Norway. The history of the version is unclear, but the actual Italian text may be by Marchese Pietro Gabrielli (d. 1734). The first page carries a stylised map of the Hellespont, with Europe on one side and Asia on the other, a point not made in the text itself, which is close to Musaios.¹⁴

In French, a celebrated early instance is that by Clément Marot (1496–1544), his *Hystoire de Leander et Hero* of 1541. Marot's frequently reprinted translation in rhymed pentameters is free but maintains the feel of the original with some memorable passages, and it is (albeit at six-hundred plus lines) a little closer to Musaios in length than its almost exact contemporary, Juan Boscán's *Leandro*, which is nearly five times as long (although it does contain a long interpolation). Even Marot's minor adaptations can be striking: as a single example, where Musaios has Hero light on the fateful winter's night "the torch of fate (*Moiraeon*), no longer that of love" (308), Marot uses the name of the one of the Moirai, the Fates, who cuts the thread of life: "Meit sur la tour le flambeaux sans propos/ Non plus flambeaux d'amour, mais d'Atropos" (Full of desire she set out the torch without further ado, no longer the torch of love, but of Atropos).¹⁵ The torch is stressed throughout as light and as the fire of love.

Later French versions appeared by Julien-Jacques Moutonnet-Clairfons (1740–1813) and by Jean-Baptist Gail (1755–1829) in Paris in 1775 and 1796 respectively and there were very many adaptations in the subsequent decades, one of which may serve as an example. Pierre Jacques René Denne-Baron (1780–1854), published in 1806 an expanded *Héro et Léandre* in four cantos of rhymed couplets. An introduction invokes Venus before settling into the narrative, and at the end the durability of the story is underlined, even though, we

13 The text is in Bernardo Tasso, *Rime*, vol. II (Bergamo: Lancellotto, 1749), pp. 83–102 (online). Boucher, "Who Taught Thee...." p. 20 refers to Tasso's expansion of Ovid's dolphins.

14 Further texts in Italian verse are those by Giovanbattista Casaregi (Florence, 1750), and Cidalmio Orio (Francesco Catelano) in Tuscan verse in 1753. That by Marcaurelio Soranzo (Venice, 1757) has been mentioned already, and the various bibliographical lists mention a further dozen or so down to 1832.

15 Clément Marot, *Hystoire de Leander et Hero*, in: *Oeuvres Complètes*, ed. Abel Grenier (Paris: Garnier, 1938), II, 232–48; this citation is on p. 246. On the development of Greek studies in renaissance France, with Musaios as one of the first Greek texts printed, see the still interesting "introductory essay" by Tilley, *Literature of the French Renaissance*, pp. 155–61.

are told that the tower where once the torch of love shone forth can no longer be found. The work is most notable, however, both for the extended commentary which accompanies each canto and which rather outweighs the (perfectly serviceable) poem, and for an introduction in which Musaios is seen as more medieval than classical.¹⁶

Musaios appeared in English at the beginning of the seventeenth century by George Chapman, the continuator of Marlowe's (very) free adaptation, and translations continue to appear well into the eighteenth and beyond. Later texts are those by Sir Robert Stapylton (or Stapleton, d. 1669), who also produced an eccentric drama on the theme, and who included with his translation the two letters by Ovid in *The Loves of Hero and Leander* (Oxford, 1645 and London 1647); by Thomas Hoy (1659–ca 1718), together with Ovid's *Art of Love*, in 1682; by the otherwise unknown David Russel[1] in the *Oxford and Cambridge Miscellany* (London [1708]); by another, again rather minor poet laureate, Laurence Eusden (1688–1730), in 1716; by Lewis Theobald (1688–1744), with an introductory essay, in *The Grove* (London, 1721). A translation “addressed to the ladies of Great Britain”, this time by Robert Luck (1674–1749), the Devon schoolmaster who taught John Gay, appeared in *A Miscellany of New Poems on Several Occasions* (London, 1736 and 1737). Luck's text (how Leander “bravely swam to his Night-marry'd bride”) is again in heroic couplets, and Pope was one of the subscribers.¹⁷ There is a memorable summary of the tale

16 P. Denne-Baron, *Héro et Léandre: Poème en quatre chants. Suivi de poésies diverses* (Paris: le Normant, 1806) (online). The Gallica/BNF website indicates how many adaptations of Musaios were published (G. de la Porte du Theil, 1784; Antoine de Courmand, 1807; Charles Mollevaut, 1813; Paul Ristelhuber, 1859 and others).

17 Further English verse translations or paraphrases are those by Alexander Stopford Catcott (Oxford, 1715); by James Sterling (fl. 1718–55), written in 1728 and included in his *Poetical Works* (Dublin, 1734); by George Bally, an eighteenth-century fellow of King's College (Cambridge, 1747); by J. Slade (London, 1753), a work the wonderfully caustic *Monthly Review* (8, 1753) suggested would not have harmed the barely-known poet's reputation had he left it unpublished; by Grosvenor Charles Bedford (1773–1839) (London, 1797); by Francis Fawkes (1720–1777) in *The Works of Anacreon, Sappho, Bion, Moschus, and Musaeus* (London, 1760); and by Edward Barnaby Green, *Hero and Leander, A Poem from the Greek of Musaeus* (London, 1773). Lowndes, *Bibliographer's Manual*, 11, 1315 notes beside editions of Musaios in Latin translation (as that by Blake in 1694), the English translation which appears first in Aphra Behn's *Miscellany* of 1685. See also Watt's *Bibliotheca Britannica*, 11, 698. The two-volume *Poetical Register* of plays and poetry in English, published in London in 1723 (reprinted Farnborough: Gregg, 1966), 11, 52 and 305 notes beside Marlowe's verse and Stapylton's play (it does not list his translations), the versions by Russel and Eusden, praising the latter, which opens with a reference to Leander seeking “the dangerous joys of Hero's bed”. Worthy of note is the commentary by J. H. on Stapylton's *The Loves of Hero and Leander* in *Censura Literaria* New Series 4 (7 of the whole series), London, 1808, pp. 57–67, which gives samples of several versions and lists others.

by John Bacon Sawrey Morritt (1771–1843) in his *Translations and Imitations of the Minor Greek Poets* (London, 1802): “The swimming lover, and the nightly bride;/ How Hero wept and how Leander died”.

Adriaan van Nispen (1633–94) published a Dutch text — *Rampzalige Leander van Musaeus* (Unfortunate Leander, by Musaios) — in Dordrecht in 1651, which is again really a summary and brief retelling of Musaios, while a fuller text (in 482 alexandrines) by the poet and dramatist Joan Pluimer (ca 1647–1718), probably one of his earlier works, is included in his collected poems which appeared in Amsterdam in 1677 and 1692. It has some close passages, but also uses material from Ovid. Berenice Verhelst notes for example, the feeling by Leander that the fire (of the torch, of love) is such “Dat ik de kille kouw der Zee niet kan gevoelen” (verse 236), ‘that I cannot feel the chilling cold of the sea’), an idea which is in Ovid, but not Musaios. Pluimer’s text also has an extended passage at the beginning making the familiar point about Europe and Asia.¹⁸

The first German text is probably the prose translation by Christoph Bruno in the middle of the sixteenth century, whose *Histori von dem Jüngling Leander vnnd von der Jungkfrawenn Ero ex Museo* (tale of young Leander and the young woman Hero, from Musaios) appeared in Augsburg in 1541. The prose adaptation adds asides: when Hero is introduced as a priestess of Venus, we are informed in parentheses that pagans in older times used to hold such gods and goddesses in great honour (p. iv). Some of the work is literal: “Also wz ... Ero des tags ein jungkfraw/ des nachts ein weyb” (so Hero was a virgin during the day and a wife at night, p. vii), but Bruno adds “den eltern gantz verborgen” (quite hidden from her parents). At the end there is a moral: young people should be warned by this example against such excessive and overdone love, from which no good ever comes (p. viii).¹⁹ A version by Christian Alektorander (Hahnemann, Hanmann, mid-17th century) was published in Leipzig in 1633, and his splendid title is worth citing: “Des schönen Poeten Musaeus Lieb- und Lobgedichte Von Hero und Leandern. Aus dem Griechischen In Hochteutsche

18 Verhelst, *Mousaios’ Ta kath’ Hero kai Leandron*, pp. 28–34 discusses these and other early Dutch translations in detail, with other examples in the case of Pluimer. She notes that a more acceptable version appeared in 1801 by Fokke Simonszoon (1755–1812). The 1677 collected edition of Pluimer’s poems contains a poem in praise of the work by the poet Diderik (Dirk) Buysero (1644–1708). The 1692 collection is available on-line, edited by Els van Schaik: let.leidenuniv.nl/Dutch/Renaissance/PluimerGedichten1692.html#Hero.

19 Christoph Bruno, *Etlche Historien vnnd fabulen gantz lustig zuo lesen* (Augsburg: Hainrich Stayner, 1541), pp. i–viii. Abbreviations have been resolved. The text is available online through the digitization programme of the Bavarian State Library. *Jungkfraw*, *Jungfrau* means virgin and young woman, of course, always a difficult specific in the case of Hero.

jtzt übliche neue Reimen übersetzt, Sampt nothwendiger Erklärung" (The fine poet Musaios's Love- and Laudatory poems of Hero and Leander. Translated from the Greek into High German in the now usual contemporary rhyme-form, together with any necessary explanation). This seems to have been an early work by Hahnemann (it was dedicated to a fellow-student), but it has been described as a "not at all badly made."²⁰ There were many later texts, including one by the Austrian Johan Baptist von Alxinger (1755–97) in forty-one eight-line stanzas, thus matching the length of the original quite well. The work is dedicated to Christoph Wieland and was certainly part of the culture of the Vienna into which Grillparzer was born.²¹ There is also an anonymously published text of 1799, in fact by Friedrich Wilhelm Geucke (1770–1805), with the arresting title *Der nächtliche Schwimmer*, the nocturnal swimmer.²²

The earliest translation into Swedish is something of an oddity, its translator being the Italian Abbé Michelessi, who published the text, with the *Heroides* material, in Stockholm in 1772. A Polish text translated by (Jan) Walenty Jakubowski (d. 1582) appeared in 1572 as *Leander i Hero* (Kraków: Szarffenberg). This necessarily brief and certainly incomplete survey of translations is indicative at least of a lasting interest in the classical sources.

3 Independent Poetic Treatments

In the period from the renaissance down to the eighteenth century, which takes in Tudor and Restoration England, the Spanish Golden Age, and the German

²⁰ See the bibliographical catalogue of the Yale baroque collection by Curt von Faber du Faur, *German Baroque Literature* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1958), p. 73f. The work is described as "the first translation", meaning presumably into verse. Hahnemann (the name is variously spelt) means 'hen-man', hence the Graecized name, from *alektoris*, a hen.

²¹ 'Hero und Leander (nach dem Musäus)' is in the first volume of Alxinger's *Gedichte* (Vienna: Haas, 1812), pp. 33–56. See Josef Nadler, *Grillparzer* (Vienna: Bergland: 1952), p. 11. The German Wikipedia entry "Hero und Leander" notes a play by him with the title *Hero*, but although he did write plays on classical themes, presumably the Musaios translation is meant. It is dated 1785. See Jellinek, *Sage*, p. 42

²² This text is known in two versions, one with the top-title *Der nächtliche Schwimmer* and another identical text with only the rest of the title: *Hero und Leander. Eine Reliquie für Liebende von Musäus* (Nonneburg: Schumann, and Leipzig: Barth, 1799). Geucke appears in the introduction as "W. Gke". The volume also contains, p. 97f., a translation of the brief poem by Markos Musuros and a poem of Geucke's own on Hero's and Leander's death, p. 99, discussed below in the context of the lyric. Färber, *Musaïos*, p. 98 lists further German translations of Musaios and notes the existence of many more. They continue well into the nineteenth century.

baroque, there are large numbers of clearly independent full treatments of the theme in verse. There are, of course, considerable poetic differences across such a lengthy period, and there is more than just a chronological distance between, say, the four-beat German verse of Hans Sachs in 1541 (and the early Spanish romance octosyllables), the Latin hexameters of Kaspar von Barth in 1612, and the baroque alexandrines of Wolfgang von Hohberg fifty years beyond that.²³ Spanish verse treatments alone are remarkably numerous, and given that there are also dramas, parodies and an equally large number of shorter lyrics, the Iberian peninsula seems to have been particularly taken with the tale.²⁴ The various early anonymous Spanish romances on the theme are brief and simple in form and style and are in some ways close to the ballad in other languages, but they present the known tale with the characters and places named. Later Spanish writers continued to produce (sometimes more sophisticated) versions of the narrative within this *romancero* tradition.

The dramatic tradition, the comic or parodic versions in various genres, the ballads, and the very numerous single lyrics are for the most part treated in later chapters. So too, only a few prose texts are considered here. Some

23 See the useful bibliography of sixteenth- to eighteenth-century texts for the Austrian Academy of Sciences by Bernhard Kreuz, Petra Aigner and Christine Harrauer, *Bibliographie zum Nachleben des antiken Mythos* (Vienna, 2013), online at: <https://epub.oeaw.ac.at/31l/mythos/bibliographie.pdf>.

24 The extent of Spanish reworkings of the theme from this period was documented in the context of Juan Boscán by the eminent literary scholar Marcelino Menéndez y Pelayo (1856–1912) in his *Antología de poetas líricos castellanos*, XIII, 335–78. His “bibliografía española de Leandro y Hero” on pp. 359–78 contains over sixty references, many with some textual citation (online in the Bibliotheca Digital Hispánica). Moya del Baño, *El Tema*, provides as an appendix the texts of many of the works concerned (here usually the version cited). She also includes, p. 322f., relevant Spanish translations or adaptations of Vergil, Martial and Statius by Fernando de Herrera (1534–97), as well as the adaptation of Vergil in the *Fábula de Adonis* of Diego Hurtado de Mendoza (1503–1573), p. 234. and Juan de Arjona's (1560–1603) Statius, as well as the *Heroides* letters by Diego Meixa (Meija) and the Musaios translations by Jose Antonio Conde and Jimenez de Aquino. See further María Jesús Franco Durán, “El Mito de Hero y Leandro: algunas fuentes grecolatinas y su pervivencia en el siglo de oro español”, *Verba Hispanica* 4 (1994), 65–82 (online). There are English translations of many relevant texts in the important collection by Philip Krummrich, *The Hero and Leander Theme in Iberian Literature 1500–1800. An Anthology of Translations* (Lewiston: Mellen, 2006). Krummrich does not include the translations of classical writers but does add texts in Portuguese and Asturian as well as Castilian. He also includes Joan Roig de Corella. See finally Sofie Kluge, “Hero and Leander in Various Attires: Configurations of Desire in the Mythological Poetry of Francisco de Quevedo”, in: *Allusions and Reflections: Greek and Roman Mythology in Renaissance Europe*, ed. Elisabeth Wåghäll Nivre (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2015), pp. 325–46, a paper which goes well beyond its immediate subject of Quevedo.

eighteenth-century English chapbooks are included because of their link with Henry Petowe's unusual continuation of Marlowe; Mangelsdorf's work is very clearly a prose-poem, and the same applies to a French text from the beginning of the nineteenth century, which is included, despite the chronology, as a pendant to Mangelsdorf.

4 **Hans Sachs, Historia: *Die unglückhafft lieb Leandri mit fraw Ehron* (1541)**

The Nuremberg writer and supporter of the Reformation Hans Sachs (1494–1576) is famously prolific and produced poems and plays on an enormous range of biblical, classical and medieval themes, amongst them a *Meisterlied* on “the unhappy love of Leander and his lady, Hero”.²⁵ The opening lines of Sachs's brief piece (not much above seventy lines of four-beat *Knittelvers*, with a moralising conclusion) establish the antiquity of the tale by naming the source, Musaios; he wrote long ago about the handsome young man Leander and the tender virgin Hero, who lived in a high tower, once again relocated to Abydos. Leander's fatherland, we are told, is Sestos. The pair are burning with love, but cannot reach each other, although we are given no hints as to why. Eventually Leander has the idea of swimming at night, and that Hero should light a lamp for him to follow. How this is communicated is not clear, though there are Ovidian elements elsewhere, so perhaps Sachs had the letters in mind.

In Sachs's version, Leander sees the sign and although initially frightened by the wild and cruel sea, swims to her, is welcomed, and she dries his limbs. They enjoy a night of love, and Leander swims back (in this version) to Sestos; this becomes a regular occurrence, “Biß ihn das untrew wanckel glück/ Kürztlich beweist sein neydisch dück” (196, 6f., until faithless, shifting fortune soon showed them its envious wickedness). It is winter, but Leander goes on with his nocturnal visits until one night the stormy wind blows out the lamp and the sea becomes wild and dangerous — Sachs offers a vivid descriptive passage of the mountainous waves — so that Leander drowns. Hero is distraught that Leander does not come, and eventually the sea tosses his body onto the shore below her tower at dawn. She rushes from her tower,²⁶ embraces her

25 Hans Sachs, *Werke*, ed. A. von Keller and E. Goetze (Tübingen: Laupp/BLVS, 1870–1908, repr. Hildesheim: Olms, 1964), II, 195–7. See Jellinek, *Sage*, p. 10f, and my “Bearbeitungen”, p. 243f.

26 She does in other versions throw herself from the tower to her death; here “Zu hand sie auß dem thuren sprung”, 196, 34, at once she threw herself from the tower) presumably means, however, simply that she rushed out, rather than leapt.

dead lover and drowns with him: “Sprach: Hast du dein leib umb mich geben/ Mag ich an dich auch nit mehr leben” (196, 36f. [Hero] said: if you have given your life for me, I no longer wish to live without you).

Thus the narrative. Sachs, however, adds a six-line *Beschluß*, a moralising conclusion, pointing out that fleshly love may burn strongly, but can lead to tragedy. Neither Hero nor Leander is praised for their faithfulness, and this generalisation seems to be a condemnation of excess. Sachs ends with a rather trite ‘old proverb’ (*alt sprichwort*) to the effect that love can be the start of much discomfort for the body and the soul. Although Sachs’s version continues the medieval tradition of having an overt moral, the brief and vivid presentation of the story seems quite separate from it. The moral has a detached feel in some of the medieval texts, and this is even more obviously the case here.

5 Spanish Romances (16th Century)

The very extensive (originally Castilian) *romancero* tradition²⁷ contains several works on the theme from the sixteenth century or earlier, many collected already in the later part of that century by Juan de Timoneda and Ginés Pérez de Hita, for example, and analysed in modern times by scholars such as Ramón Menéndez Pidal. The relevant examples are short; of the three major texts, two have around forty lines, the third seventy.²⁸ The story-telling is, as in some later ballads in other languages, direct, and without an explicit (or even implicit) moral.

The early Spanish romances, typically in eight-syllable assonantic lines (arguments have been made for sixteen syllables with a break, and the grouping of lines has also been discussed), emphasise monologues and situations. Those dealing with Hero and Leander retain the classical names and places, unlike most ballads, and they give some glimpses into the minds of the protagonists. The three texts have been presented and analysed by Elbia Difabrio

27 There is a useful introduction to the tradition, style and metrics of the *romancero* in the collection (unfortunately without a Hero and Leander example) edited by C. Colin Smith, *Spanish Ballads* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1964), pp. 1–50, with an excellent bibliography. As his title implies, the terms ballad and romance can overlap. Chronological arrangement is equally difficult, and the romances are often assigned to Spanish *medieval* literature: see Francisco López Estrada, *Introducción a la literatura medieval española* (Madrid: Gredos, 1966), pp. 247–58.

28 There is also a Judaeo-Spanish (Sephardic) text which has some elements of the tale. It is discussed by Moya del Baño, *El Tema*, pp. 57–9 and see p. 215 (text fragment), and is probably earlier, perhaps fifteenth century.

de Raimondo,²⁹ and the closed presentation of the narrative in all of them, concentrating on the deaths of the protagonists, is clear even from the title of the third, *Romance de Leandro y Hero y como murio* (... and how they died). The first opens with Leander swimming the Hellespont (in fact for the last time): “Por el braço de Elesponto/ Leandro (sic) va nauegando ...” (Leander goes swimming in the arms of the Hellespont ...). Neptune is against him, and he dies exhausted, lamenting the loss of everything:

o la mi tierra de Abido
que pensaras yo faltando
o mis parientes y amigos
no me espereys deseando
o la mi señora Hero
que haras dime tu quando
veras este triste cuerpo ...

(O, my homeland of Abydos, what will you think of losing me; o my relatives and friends, do not wait for me; o my lady Hero, what will you say to me when you see this sad corpse ...)

He dies repeating the name of Hero, but he does not blame her.

The second, with the title *Leandro y Hero* and beginning “Aguardando esta Hero/ al amante que solía ...” (That Hero, waiting for her lover ...) seems to belong with the first, and shows us the very last stage of the tale, this time with Hero unable to sleep and fearful for the life of Leander, lamenting her fate in a monologue which matches his in the first romance: “¡Oh desdichada mujer!/ ¡Oh gran desventura mia/ pues he perdido mi amado ...” (O wretched woman, o my great misfortune, for I have lost my love). In this short text the pair are united in the Elysian Fields and are buried together, joined therefore *after* death rather than simply *in* death. The reference to Elysium, familiar in the tradition, comes before the burial.

The third and longest romance is similar in content, but more descriptive and somewhat fuller, opening with a view of the darkened heavens. Hero

29 Elbia Difabrio de Raimondo, “Romances de tema mitológico: la historia de Hero y Leandro”, *Circe de clásicos y modernos* 9 (2004), 175–89 (online). The article sketches the history of the theme, and gives details of earlier editions for each text, the first two of which are here cited from this study. The third of these romances is also in Moya del Baño, *El Tema*, pp. 217–8 (and see pp. 60–1), and is here cited from that edition, which differs slightly from that in Difabrio. Two were discussed by Jellinek, *Sage*, pp. 46–8. The motifs he links with Boscán are mostly commonplace, and sometimes have classical origins.

watches the skies fearfully, afraid for Leander, and her fear is a key theme. At the end she laments his loss, declares (to Leander) that she, as in many versions, no longer wants to live without him (“no quiero vivir sin ti”) and the last lines are abrupt: “Estas palabras diciendo/ de la torre se caía” (so saying, she throws herself from the tower).

Some of the inner thoughts of the two lovers are expressed in what are effectively monologues by Leander and by Hero, but the concentration is upon details that we have of the tale, specifically the double death. The roughly contemporary work of Hans Sachs is comparable in length and not dissimilar in form, but there is a difference in approach in that the Spanish texts do not add even a detached moral, presenting instead a simple narrative of faithful lovers responding to their own tragedy.

6 Juan Boscán Almogáver, *Leandro* (1539/1543)

One of the first important full-scale reworkings of the narrative in modern times is the extensive heroic poem in 2,793 regular hendecasyllabic blank verse lines (on the model of Italian verse, as used in Tasso's paraphrase of Musaios) by Juan Boscán (ca 1487–1542), who was born in Barcelona into a Catalan family, though he wrote in Castilian. He and his friend Garcilaso de la Vega (1501–36), both with Italian connections, are credited with the introduction of Italian metres into Castilian verse. His *Leandro*, composed probably in 1539, was included as the third book of the collected works (which includes some by Garcilaso de la Vega), published in 1543 by his widow, and which appeared in numerous editions over the subsequent decades.³⁰ It is prefaced in the

30 *Las Obras de Boscán y algunas de Garcilaso de la Vega repartidas in quatro libros* (Barcelona: Carlos Amorós, 1543 and later eds.); many of the editions published in various places between 1543 and the end of the century have been digitised in the Biblioteca Digital Hispánica. There is also a modern edition available online as part of the Biblioteca Virtual Miguel de Cervantes (www.cervantesvirtual.com) and this is cited here. It is based on the print edition by Enrique Diez Canedo, *Garcilaso y Boscán, Obras Poéticas* (Madrid: Colleja, 1917) compared with more recent editions including: *Obras Poéticas de Juan Boscán*, ed. Martín de Riquer, Antonio Comas and Joaquín Molas (Barcelona: Facultad de Filología, 1957) and *Obra Completa*, ed. Carlos Clavería (Barcelona: Catedra, 1999). Krummrich has a translation of the text and of Garcilaso's sonnet. Reference must be made again to Boutcher, “Who Taught Thee ...”, not only for important insights into the work and its influence in England, and the locating of the work beside Marlowe in the context of renaissance vernacular writing, but also for the close examination of the British Library copy of the *Obras* (Antwerp, 1550), with annotations by its owner, Bartholomew Yong. Boutcher also discusses the inserted narrative in Boscán, comparing it with Marlowe. See

collected works by a sonnet on the theme by Garcilaso, “Pasando el mar Leandro el animoso” (Bold Leander, crossing the sea ...) which became extremely well-known and would be echoed in other sonnets and used as a starting point for extended commentaries on the theme. These *glosas* upon Garcilaso’s sonnet are, in a sense, separate longer works (some have fourteen strophes, each taking up a line of the sonnet); but they are more appropriately considered in the context of Garcilaso’s lyric. Boscán’s work is quite different.

In close relation to the (Latin) *Musaio*s — the gods have their Roman names — Boscán’s poem opens with an invocation to the muse to tell the known tale of Hero, Leander and the lamp: “la lumbre³¹ muerta y a Leandro muerto” (the death of the light and the death of Leander, 19). Much else is added to *Musaio*s in displays of learning (the Europe/Asia point is made more than once), and in the development of Leander’s rhetorical speeches. The work also contains a lengthy interpolation presenting the tale of Aristaeus, Cyrene, Proteus and the bees, and within that the tale of Orpheus and Eurydice, in a section which separates the rise of the love between the two young people from the catastrophe. Warren Boutcher has noted that the first of these shows a successful conflict with a god, the second a tragic love-story which is occasionally alluded to elsewhere in the Hero and Leander tradition.³² The tale of Aristaeus (with that of Orpheus) is in Vergil’s *Georgics* IV, 315–558. Opinions have varied on the overall effect of Boscán’s version, ranging from “uninspired” to “competent rather than brilliant” and to more positive judgments. But the work is nevertheless a milestone, with good individual lines as well as developed passages.

Hero is established at the start, living in her high tower a contented life devoted to the goddess, and free of love: “virgen y virginal su vivir era” (59, virgin and virginal was her life). At the festival of Venus and Adonis all admire her beauty, which is like that of a goddess: “Hero, la virgen generosa, illustre/ Entrava con sus rayos d’hermosura” (125f., Hero entered, the beneficent and famous virgin, surrounded by the radiance of beauty). Leander is struck by the

on Boscán not only Menéndez y Pelayo, *Antología* XIII, 350–9 (comparing Boscán with Tasso), but also Bienvenido Morros Mestres, “La moralización de Leandro de Boscán: orígenes, difusión e interpretación de una fábula”, *Studia Aurea* 7 (2013), 199–266 (online). The article also has an extensive history of the theme, including material on the classical and medieval sources, as does Irene Sebastián Perdices, “Leandro y Hero”, focused upon Boscán, but with a survey of other texts. See finally Jellinek, *Sage*, pp. 11–16 on Boscán and Góngora.

31 The word *lumbre* (also as a diminutive *lumbrezilla*), ultimately deriving from Latin *lumen*, has a range of meanings, including fire, brightness, light, brilliance. The variants in different languages would be an interesting study in itself.

32 “Who Taught Thee ...” pp. 42–5.

darts (*saetas*) of love, which he recognises, and he is aware from the start of their dangers, knowing already that “ne podía escaparse de la muerte” (218, he cannot escape their death). He plucks up the courage to speak to Hero, albeit with a trembling voice (439), after the sight of her causes him to lose all fear. An anaphoric passage of several lines beginning with *perdido/perdida* (511–16) stresses the loss of any inhibitions, as he dares to take Hero’s hand.³³ In another anaphoric passage she questions him, with implications of a double threat, moral and physical:

¿No sabes tú que soy sierva de Venus
y virgen, y por virgen que la sirva?
¿No sabes tú, los hombres de mi sangre
que te castigaran si saben esto? (571–4)

(Do you not know that I serve Venus, and am a virgin serving the virgin?
Do you not know that the men of my blood will punish you if they find out?)

Leander responds (590–689) in a long and rhetorically balanced speech which echoes Musaios 135–60, though it is considerably extended. He compares Hero to the goddesses Venus and Minerva, argues that Venus is after all the goddess of lovers, and invokes the legend of Atalanta and Melanion. As night falls the poetic voice invokes the Muse Polyhymnia to give the tale new impetus.

Hero is moved by Leander’s words and by new and strange thoughts (“con nuevos y diversos pensamientos”, 744), but declares that her position makes any relationship impossible. Leander, saying that he is from Abydos, tells her that he will swim across the Hellespont at night, and she need only to set a light for him to follow, rather than the stars; this is again close to Musaios. She does so, taking care, in an anticipatory line, that no cruel wind extinguishes it (“que algún viento crüel no la matarse”, 963).

The lengthy insertion from Vergil falls between the initial love-scene and the consummation and ultimately the death of the lovers. The coming together of Hero and Leander is done with some delicacy, as Hero (as in Ovid) dries Leander in an extended scene which, it has been suggested, is designed to avoid any closer description of the loss of her virginity.³⁴ What is stressed is

33 Jellinek, *Sage*, p. 15 notes the passage. Montiglio, *Hero and Leander*, p. 217 talks of Leander’s “lachrymose bashfulness” as a contrast with Marlowe’s version.

34 Morros Matres, “Moralización”, makes a (not entirely convincing) case for taking the scene in which Hero welcomes Leander as a parallel to the anointing of Christ by the woman (associated with Mary Magdalene) in Matthew 25, 6–13 and other Gospels. He links this,

their effectively married state from now on, which is then the basis for their whole relationship:

Y así fue'l casamiento celebrado
y quedaron entrambos, desde'ntonces
atados a la ley del matrimonio. (2240–2)

(And thus was their marriage celebrated and they were thereafter bound
by the laws of matrimony.)

The sexual aspects are done more fully in Marlowe, and the nature of marriage is developed and questioned in Chapman's continuation, but here the pair are presented as an example of conjugal fidelity and constancy throughout.

The latter part of the work takes us to the gloom of winter (*triste invierno*, 2338) and to the thoughts and fears of Leander, who addresses the gods in a lengthy passage, again with rhetorical devices, wondering too about the reaction of Hero if his body is washed up on her shore. The final catastrophe is done relatively briefly. A whirlwind (*torbellino*) kills the small light (*lumbrezilla*, 2768f.) and Leander dies uttering the name of Hero. For a while she sees nothing, then finds the body, tears her hair and dies with him. The final lines of the work are equally abrupt, the idea matching one of the romances: "Y así fueron juntas las dos almas/ a los campos Elisios para siempre. (2791f. and thus the two souls were united in the Elysian Fields for ever).

There is more emphasis on declamation in the work, perhaps, than on the situational aspects which are developed in other versions. The key to the treatment is Musaios's key statement that Hero is a virgin by day but a married woman at night. The stress is on their marriage, however irregular this might be, and the approach is entirely moral (though not necessarily as Christian as has been argued). Their relationship is subject to a natural law, *la ley del matrimonio*, but it is a law nevertheless, and one which endures beyond death, since the pair are again joined in the afterlife.

7 Diego Ramírez Pagán, Sonnet Sequence (1562)

The Murcian poet and priest Diego Ramirez Pagán (ca 1524–1562) produced a series of four sonnets on the theme of Hero and Leander which cover the entire story and add (in the last) a general comment, so that they may be

too, with Baudri and with Bernardo Tasso as part of a perceived Christianization of the narrative.

treated here as an independent version.³⁵ The sonnets have individual titles — *Leandro habla consigo mismo, A la muerte de Leandro, A la muerte de Hero, En la sepultura de Leandro y Hero orillas del mar* (Leander soliloquises, On the death of Leander, On the death of Hero, At the tomb of Leander and Hero on the shores of the sea).

The first presents Leander arguing with himself about undertaking the swim: the weather is too stormy, and he tells himself not to set out, “no te fies del mar embravecido” (do not trust the wild sea), but these cowardly thoughts are defeated:

¿Qué parte será el agua, ni los vientos
contra la deidad de la alta Hero
que con divina boz me está llamando?

(What is the sea and the winds against the goddess, great Hero, calling me with a divine voice?)

Ipsa dea est. Ovid is intensified, and is echoed, too, in the next sonnet when Leander becomes a ship himself on the dark sea with only the light of Hero's lamp (*Leander Heroni*, 148–55) to guide him. But the sea kills the light, and although Leander asks the gods for help in taking him to Hero (perhaps an echo of Martial, though it is not developed as fully as in other Spanish sonnets), their cruelty allows the sea to swallow his voice. In the third sonnet, Hero sees Leander's corpse, hurls herself upon it, and dies in a moment.

The final sonnet is detached from the narrative but assumes that the pair have been buried together by the sea; it is addressed to the passer-by, (a regular feature of the epitaph, as in Simonides's familiar memorial for the dead at Thermopylae). The poetic voice asks: “O tu que vas tu vía caminando/ detén un poco el paso pressuroso” (Passer-by, as you go on your way, pause a little in your hurried steps). Here lies Leander, who now has repose, and Hero who died for him, their memorial a small stone by the mighty sea (*poca piedra y gran mar*). The image, with the shifting focus from the lovers to the stone, and then the great and eternal sea, is memorable. The final lines acknowledge the antiquity of the nevertheless enduring narrative: “hay honra al venerable monumento/ que dá a los dos muriendo immortal vida” (Give honour to the ancient monument which grants to these two in death an immortal life).

35 The texts are in Moya del Baño, *El Tema*, p. 220f. A *Floresta de varia poesia* survives in manuscript. Krummrich has a translation. The many other Spanish sonnets on theme are discussed under the heading of the lyric.

The four sonnets offer a range of points of view. In the first we see into Leander's thoughts and conflicts; the next two are presented objectively, albeit with comments on the cruelty of the gods; and the final sonnet distances itself by taking us to the (eternal) present, and reminding the passer-by of the tale, just as the sequence is itself a monument to an ancient but still known story.

8 Marlowe, Chapman, and Petowe

The best-known of all the English versions of the tale is found in three linked but separate works, two of them much read and studied, the other not at all well-known.³⁶ The poem of Hero and Leander by Christopher Marlowe (1564–1593), dedicated to Sir Thomas Walsingham, is incomplete; we have two sestads of 484 and 334 iambic pentameters in rhymed couplets, ending with the words *desunt nonnulla*, some parts missing, in fact the remaining four sestads. It was entered in the Stationer's Register shortly after Marlowe's death, though when it was written is unclear, and was published with the continuation by George Chapman (ca 1559–1634) in 1598. C. S. Lewis has made an interesting case for reading these in the way in which they were first published,³⁷ although there are clear differences of which Chapman was well aware. His final four sestads use the same format (419, 350, 496 and 293 rhymed lines respectively). The "Second Part", which Henry Petowe (1575/6–ca 1636) attached (with modest but accurate protestations of inferiority) to Marlowe's fragment was also published in 1598. Here, however, the case for separate treatment is patent, as his approach to the narrative is entirely different and has, in fact, little to

36 All citations are from the edition by Stephen Orgel, *Christopher Marlowe. The Complete Poems and Translations* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1971). Marlowe's own text is on pp. 13–42, Chapman's continuation on pp. 43–89, and Petowe's *Second Part* on pp. 90–110. No account can be taken here of the detailed textual discussions about Marlowe's work, for example, which includes suggestions regarding the sexual encounter between Hero and Leander by Brooke Tucker, for example. A recent work of some interest is Graham Hammill, "The Marlovian Sublime: Imagination and the Problem of Political Theology", in: *The Return of Theory in Early Modern English Studies*, ed. Paul Cefalu and Bryan Reynolds (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 143–66, see pp. 151–3. A special edition of *Early Modern Literary Studies* 23 (2014) is devoted to Marlowe (*Christopher Marlowe: Identities, Traditions, Afterlives*), with papers on *Hero and Leander*.

37 C. S. Lewis, "Hero and Leander", in: *Selected Literary Essays*, ed. Walter Hooper (Cambridge: CUP, 1969), pp. 58–73. The essay was originally the Warton Lecture to the British Academy in 1952, published in vol. 38 of their *Proceedings* (1952). It does not, needless to say, apply to Petowe. See also Lewis's *English Literature in the Sixteenth Century*, pp. 486–8 (Marlowe) and 513–6 (Chapman).

do with the classical Hero and Leander. Secondary studies of Marlowe and Chapman are extremely numerous, so that justice can hardly be done to this area of scholarship beyond consideration of some of the more significant studies, such as those by M. C. Bradbrook in 1933, by C. S. Lewis a couple of decades later, and by Donald James Gordon on Chapman more recently again. None of these critics discusses Petowe, and nor, indeed, do many others.

9 Christopher Marlowe, *Hero and Leander*

Although both Marlowe and Chapman refer to “divine Musaeus”, meaning the imagined ancient author, neither follows closely the Greek epyllion. “Pseudo-Musaeus is so far in the background that we can ignore him.”³⁸ All kinds of qualities have been perceived in Marlowe’s two surviving sestiams, however, including extravagance, raw eroticism, grotesqueness, and underlying elements of burlesque, all combined into — C. S. Lewis again — “a beautiful monstrosity”. The burlesque elements are important, and we can feel for the first time how easy it is to shift into exaggeration, and thus into something that cannot be taken entirely seriously.

Marlowe’s Hero is again extraordinarily beautiful, and the view of her as a quasi-goddess by Leander (and others) is taken to an extreme when we are told that Cupid would assume that she *was* his mother, Venus, and fall asleep on her breast, even though Hero is in fact “Venus’ nun” (I, 45), a much-discussed designation. She outshines Nature herself. Leander is categorized as “amorous,” and we are told from the start that this is his tragedy (I, 52). His beauty is also made (literally) legendary when his golden hair is compared to the Golden Fleece and he himself to Ganymede. Marlowe is very detailed in his description of Leander’s androgynous beauty, which makes him desired by men. “Some swore he was a maid in man’s attire”, we are told, though others, who know he is a man, wonder why he is not loved (I, 83–90).

The festival of Venus and Adonis is held at Sestos, and it is on this day that Hero and Leander meet — a “cursèd day and hour” (I, 131) — at Venus’s temple, which is itself described as decorated with “the gods in sundry shapes/Committing heady riots, incest, rapes” (I, 143f.). The images are of Jove’s assault on Danaë, of Jove leaving his sister’s bed to join the boy Ganymede, or taking Europa, or (unusually) “tumbling with” Iris, the rainbow. As Hero sacrifices amongst all these less than edifying images, she looks at Leander, and love’s arrow strikes him. Marlowe now inserts a celebrated comment about the

38 Lewis, “Hero and Leander”, p. 58.

inescapability of love, and of its necessary impetuosity: “Where both deliberate, the love is slight;/ Who ever loved, that loved not at first sight?” (I, 175f.). The love is mutual, Hero blushes, he touches her hand but is mute until “Love’s holy fire” (I, 193) makes him speak “like a bold sharp sophister” (I, 197). The love between the two is brought about by words, by Leander’s well-developed rhetoric, as he argues for almost a hundred lines against virginity for its own sake as being a formless nothing, since there can be no virtue in doing nothing. Hero, weeping, replies that she has devoted herself to Venus, at which he continues his rhetorical outpouring by explaining what Venus herself requires, and that Hero’s chastity is an affront to Venus, worse than perjury, “even sacrilege against her deity” (I, 307). Hero’s smile encourages him to push the point that she should “Abandon fruitless cold virginity” (I, 317) in proper devotion to Venus. Hero is caught by Cupid’s golden hook, although she pretends to be angry. But Leander’s persuasion has won the day as she asks:

Who taught thee rhetoric to deceive a maid?
Aye me, such words as these I should abhor,
And yet I like them for the orator (I, 338f.)

Leander’s persuasive skills, highlighted in the first and famous line of that speech, are regularly and explicitly stressed, all deriving ultimately from Musaios 175–6, asking where Leander was taught (as rhetoric was) to use words that could move stone.

Hero tells Leander that she lives in a tower accompanied only by “a dwarfish beldame”, and then suddenly says “Come thither,” something Marlowe tells us is a slip (trip) of the tongue, made unawares (I, 358).³⁹ Things are beyond her control, her vow of spotless chastity is in vain (I, 368). Cupid now goes to the Fates (the Destinies) to ask that the pair might be allowed to love. The Fates refuse, and Marlowe inserts a justification for their anger with his own complex legend of Mercury having stolen nectar from the gods to please a human

39 See M. C. Bradbrook, “Hero and Leander”, *Scrutiny* 2 (1933–4), 59–64, where this element is seen as comical, p. 62. The importance of Leander’s rhetorical persuasion in the renaissance versions by Boscán and Marlowe is the subject of Boutcher’s study, which draws its title from this part of the work: “Who Taught Thee ...”. Lewis, “Hero and Leander”, refers to Hero’s invitations as having slipped out unconsciously. A similar note will be struck in Grillparzer’s play. On the sexual aspects (and implications for the assumed completed text) of the work, a paper by William Walsh is important: “Sexual Discovery and Renaissance Morality in Marlowe’s *Hero and Leander*”, *Studies in English Literature* 12 (1972), 33–5. Very recent studies have tried (unconvincingly) to link Marlowe’s work with the concept of rape-culture.

country maid, as a result of which an angry Jove ejects him from the heavens. To help him, Cupid had arranged for the Fates to fall in love with him, which causes an upheaval in the order of Olympus. Mercury ignores the Fates, however, the old order is restored, Mercury is linked with Poverty (which is why all scholars are poor), and the Fates — significantly — will no longer assist Cupid.

The second sestiad resumes the story after this digression and celebrates the love of the young protagonists. It falls into two sections, separated, as it were, by the Hellespont, and the love is shown first in terms of youthful eagerness and inexperience. Leander initially stays in Sestos, and, in a nod to Ovid, writes Hero a letter to which she replies, but then he comes to her tower by stealth and finds the door open to him. Their embraces are vigorous, “He asked, she gave, and nothing was denied” (II, 25), but Hero does not yet surrender her virginity. Leander toys with her as with a sister, “Supposing nothing else was to be done” (II, 53), although he does feel that “Some amorous rites or other were neglected” (II, 64). The brief classical reference that Marlowe slips in here is to compare Leander with Aesop’s cock (who finds a jewel but does not know its worth). Hero, meanwhile, teases him as Tantalus was teased, “And, seeming lavish, saved her maidenhead.” (II, 76). The potential of all the various word-plays here need not be laboured.

In the morning Leander sails back to Abydos, wearing tokens of their love, including the ring with which she had vowed religious chastity. Rebuked by his father, this makes him more determined, and there is now nothing that “mad Leander” will not dare. He prays that the Hellespont will part, but since its answer is a predictable “no”, he strips down (as in Ovid) and leaps into the water. It is impossible to take seriously the next part of the text: Neptune, imagining that Ganymede has left Olympus and come to him, does his best to make love to him as he swims. This causes Leander to beg that he may visit Hero before he dies, an echo of Martial’s epigram, albeit well out of an appropriate context. Neptune gives him the bracelet of Helle to protect him, but continues to pursue and caress him, while Leander protests his masculinity. Neptune begins to tell him another story about a shepherd and a boy, but the tale is broken off as Leander swims faster, angering Neptune and leaving the idea of revenge in his heart, although he does relent and permit Leander to reach Hero’s tower.

Seeing Leander standing naked on the shore at first causes Hero to cry out, indeed to screech for fear (can the line “Such sights as this to tender maids are rare”, II, 238 be taken seriously?), but he pursues her to her bed, and again uses rhetoric: “And now she lets him whisper in her ear,/Flatter entreat, promise, protest and swear” (II, 267f.). Marlowe uses the language of a military campaign to describe it all (defence, parley, truce), and their love is consummated. Then

she slips (almost literally) out of the bed and stands naked before Leander's admiring gaze as dawn breaks.

Desunt nonnulla. Marlowe's erotic fable, where even swimming the Hellespont is a (different) sexual experience, breaks off. What he has shown us is the protagonists as "greedy lovers" (II, 24), eager to take what they both want. Leander seems to undertake the nocturnal swim because his own father has tried to stop the love, but he has not said that he will do so, nor is there any lamp. Only the lust of young love motivates the narrative. How it might have continued is a speculation as pointless as it would be fruitless.

10 George Chapman's Continuation (1598)

C. S. Lewis's argument for reading Chapman together with Marlowe is not that the continuation flows smoothly, but rather that the two writers are very different, and hence complementary.⁴⁰ Where Marlowe gives us the rapturous beginnings of love, Chapman must show its end, has to work out the tragedy that Marlowe did not. He claims in his dedicatory letter that he was driven by a "strange instigation" to dedicate himself to a "trifling" subject, but he still invokes the work of the "divine Musaeus". If Marlowe has overdone and occasionally comical passages, Chapman can be obscure and overly classical, even creating new personifications, but he does pick up the idea, hinted at in Marlowe's tale of the slighted Fates, that the love was always doomed. He even echoes, to an extent, Neptune's affection. "Love's edge is taken off", we are told, however, and the approach must be "More harsh (at least more hard) more grave and high" (III, 3–5). Time passes, and fate will bring us down, whatever shields we try to hold up against it.

Chapman's first move is to take Leander back to Abydos, where he is welcomed by his sister, Hermione, showing her Hero's carcanet, one of the trophies he took in the second sestiad. Retiring alone to bed, however, he is approached by the severe figure of a new deity, one invented by Chapman, the embodiment of Ceremony, who tells him that love requires rites and ceremony.⁴¹ This is not specifically Christian, but it does counter the reckless and unordered

40 "Hero and Leander", pp. 62–73. See also Millar MacLure, *George Chapman. A Critical Study* (Toronto: Toronto UP/ London: OUP, 1967) and Gerald Snare, *The Mystification of George Chapman* (Durham NC and London: Duke UP, 1989).

41 See on the figure M. C. Bradbrook's brief and lucid introduction, *George Chapman* (London: Longman/British Council, 1977), [. 21f. He is interesting too on Hero's response to intimacy ("Her maidenhead, her vows, Leander gone" III, 200).

nature of their love. Leander vows that he will “celebrate/ All rites pertaining to his married state” (III, 159f.), and arranges with his father, who approves, that he will return to Sestos and bring Hero back formally (and safely, III, 168) by ship. Chapman now examines Hero’s confused state of mind, and the psychology of the work focuses largely on Hero and her struggle to come to terms with her love in the face of her dedication to Venus. The poet now inserts, however, the memorable summary that: “Love is a golden bubble full of dreams/ That waking breaks, and fills us with extremes”. (III, 231f.). Hero sets out to convince herself that her deeds are good, even though they broke her vows. Her sophistry reads like a parody of Luther on salvation, arguing that good works will not help gain admittance to heaven, but that the good will do good works in any case, since the good tree must bear good fruit. Indeed, she argues that vows are seeds and good deeds fruit, and that since she and Leander are one (“Hero Leander is, Leander Hero” III, 357), he may have taken her maidenhead, but she therefore still has it. The extended passage ends with a plea, however, to Venus to pity and pardon. She knows her sophistry for what it is.

The response of Venus comes in the next sestiad. Hero does point out that Venus has had her own lovers (similar points are made in Ovid), but the gods have a different set of rules. Hero tries to establish Leander almost as a god in her mind (a variation on his thoughts about her), but it is all unreal, it is dissembling, which leads to another quasi-classical creation by Chapman. The monstrous personification of Dissimulation, Eronusis, appears as Venus flees, because “Hero had dissembled, and disgraced/ Her rites so much” (IV, 310f.). If Chapman is sometimes prone to obscure prolixity, the ending of this sestiad is nevertheless impressive, as Hero defends herself with her own image of Leander:

Betwixt all this and Hero, Hero held
 Leander’s picture, as a Persean shield;
 And she was free from fear of worst success. (IV, 345–7)

But, as Chapman reminds us, self-conviction is a general human flaw.

The fifth sestiad is Chapman’s longest and least impressive, as he inserts a tale of his own invention told by the nymph Teras (also his), of the marriage of Hymen and Eucharis, with an ominous ending that he admits is a digression to delay the coming of night, to keep himself and us from Hero and Leander’s fate in the final sestiad. Critics have pointed out that Marlowe, while celebrating the unfettered love of the young, was aware of the outcome, and he warned us of the attitude of the Fates towards love. This is now picked up when one of

Venus's swans, Leucote, pleads with the Fates for a calm sea. They agree, but this time *they* are dissembling to draw Leander on. The winds seem calm, Hero lights the guiding torch with sweet incense, and there is much play upon the welcome fire.

Leander sets out, with Chapman apologising to him for having to describe his death, thus underlining both the established antiquity and the immediacy of the tale. The fleet arranged to bring Hero away from Sestos to the ceremonious marriage is prepared, and Leander shows his sister the guiding light of the torch as he sets forth into the waves which once caressed him. Now the Fates show their true colours, Leander cries in vain for help to Venus and Boreas, and Neptune (whose affections are less specific than in Marlowe) tries to help him, but the Fates have greater powers and they are spinning the thread for Leander's death. Neptune hurls his mace at the Fates as they spin, but this breaks Lachesis's thread and Leander is drowned. Hero is distraught — naming Leander repeatedly — and she dies with *his* name on her lips.

Chapman adds a metamorphosis, however, when Neptune has the pair turned into goldfinches, here a variation perhaps on the changing of Keyx and Alkyone into kingfishers, and the colours of the birds are interpreted in detail as emblems of love. The ending is that their fame is literary: "And this true honour from their love-deaths sprung/ They were the first that ever poet sung" (IV, 292f.).

In his presentation of the graver part of the story which he had inherited, Chapman attributes to the two main players a kind of hubris, but Hero's confrontation with Eronusis is different from that of Leander with Ceremony. Leander accepts the warnings of Ceremony and decides to remedy matters, but the Fates are against him and even Neptune cannot help. Hero's struggle is more direct as she pits herself against Venus, who calls up the demon of dissimulation, which is, however, part of Hero herself. Hero knows that she has broken her oath, and the psychology of her doomed attempts to persuade herself that it is somehow acceptable is striking. The pair have not embarked on marriage as part of a natural law (as in Boscán) but they have broken the laws of order. The love is disordered and violent, lacking in a natural morality which is not religiously based, but which is seen as a ordered counter to barbarism and anarchy. This is, as Donald Gordon has pointed out, the real moral of the story.⁴² Leander tries too late to provide the missing order and Hero's own rituals have already been nullified. The final metamorphosis indicating their

42 Donald James Gordon, "The Renaissance Poet as Classicist: Chapman's Hero and Leander," in his *The Renaissance Imagination. Essays and Lectures*, ed. Stephen Orgel (Berkeley, Los

ongoing fame is akin to the more familiar comfort of leaving them together in the Elysian Fields.

11 Henry Petowe, *The Second Part of Hero and Leander, Containing their Further Fortunes* (1508)

Petowe is not held in high (or, frankly, in any) regard, and the term ‘poetaster’ has been used of him. In his continuation of Marlowe, which its editor, Stephen Orgel, has termed “inept and silly”, he moves away from the classical story, provides quite a lot of extra detail, and gives the whole thing a happy ending with an added metamorphosis which is not a resolution (as it is in Chapman and elsewhere), but a kind of bonus. His version is echoed later in chapbooks. Orgel — who included it in his edition of Marlowe with reluctance but out of cultural interest — notes further that it represents “the other Elizabethan view of Marlowe’s poem, as high romance rather than heavy philosophy”.⁴³ Marlowe’s second sestiad left the lovers in the bedroom, with Leander gazing at the naked Hero. Petowe claims (of course spuriously) in the preface to his dedicatee, Sir Henry Guilford, that a friend had supplied him with the “true Italian discourse of these lovers’ further fortunes”. At all events, his focus is on love rather than on death.

While not a parody, at least not consciously so, Petowe’s continuation really has very little to do either with the original or with Marlowe, even though he is self-consciously aware that the tale is supposedly about “Fair Hero and Leander’s misery”. His text is in heroic couplets with interspersed lyrical passages. Marlowe’s Leander was a sharp sophister and Chapman invoked his own classical figures, but Petowe’s characters employ an entire armoury of *colores rhetorici*: apostrophe, anaphora, less than effective images, word repetitions and overdone sound-plays, as when Hero laments:

I wanted to renew
My lifeless life when life was almost done.
Done is my life, and all my pleasures done
For he is gone in whom my life begun ... (389–92)

Angeles and London: U. California Press, 1975), pp. 102–33, esp. p. 129. Gordon makes a link on this point with the equally long and equally classical version by Kaspar von Barth.

43 Marlowe, *Complete Poems*, p. 7.

or Leander tells us that the heavens pity all grieving creatures:

save me, a slave to spoil[.]
 Spoil do his worst, spoil cannot spoil me more;
 Spoil never spoiled so true a love before. (440–2)

Petowe does start with the gods, Apollo singing of Hero's beauty, and Venus's jealousy, but he is more concerned to laud Marlowe, who has shown us Hero's beauty and "Leander's love and lovers' sweetest pleasures" (117), leaving him, however, with only their misery to retell (122). Marlowe did not tell, he says, of the tricks played by *Unconstant Fortune* (158) that separated the lovers. This does not refer, however, to the storms of the Hellespont, but to one Duke Archilaüs, regent of Hero's city, who is driven by lust for her. He threatens and pleads, but she has already chosen Leander, whom she embraces in a series of images, some of which verge on the absurd: she clings to him "like as crab-fish having caught in seas/ His enemies, doth clasp them with his cleas" (217f.) before he is driven away from Sestos. Petowe sends him off to Delphi, to consult the oracles ("Leave we awhile Leander ..." 239).

Archilaüs, still driven by lust, returns to his amorous efforts, of course in vain. The emotions are entirely superficial, and also the only inner conflicts shown are from Archilaüs, with whom one is certainly not supposed to sympathize, and who is in any case fairly rapidly removed. Spurned by Hero, he elects, after a series of implausible nature images, to "die for my desire" (300). His brother and successor, Euristippus, proves more of a problem. Hero, who has no Leander to defend her, is blamed for causing the death of Archilaüs by poison, and imprisoned, giving rise to the lament cited above (extended over three ababccdd octets), after which the poet leaves "Hero in a heavy plight" and returns to Leander, who makes a similar complaint (in a different metre) about his loneliness. In Ovid the pair are separated, but the letters communicate to each other and the audience a range of feelings: love, frustration, envy, jealousy, fears for the other's life. Here we see the single emotion: misery, and both laments end with the desire to die: "Hero needs must die" (418), "Leander's life must end" (454). This might have been ironic anticipation in a more straightforward version, but here it is a different kind of turning-point, as heaven — not the gods — decides now "to set a period to Leander's toil" (457). Apollo's oracle, speaking with uncharacteristic clarity and in just four rhymed lines, tells Leander that Hero will be killed if he does not rescue her. He returns in time for a tournament, a stock scene in the romance, for which Hero is brought out to be the prize. The people come to view Hero as much as the

spectacle, (we are told in a Latin line), and much is made of the contrast with her beauty and the prison: “This fair-faced beauty from a foul-faced cell” (491). Euristippus, in gold armour, is despatched in half-a dozen lines by a disguised Leander intent on proving his love. The unknown knight now becomes Duke of Sestos. Hero proclaims that she can love no-one else while Leander is alive, and constancy has thus been demonstrated on both sides. Leander reveals his identity, the pair are reunited and live happily quite literally ever after, with the help once more of a metamorphosis. After a long life, during which they are much admired by the whole world, they are turned this time into things which live longer than goldfinches, namely pine trees, and the whole ends with a scrap of literary botany to the effect that a female pine tree will die if a male tree is not planted nearby.

The work is indeed in many respects “inept and silly”. Any psychology is entirely superficial: neither lover ever has any doubts, and the love is tested extrinsically by the romance device of the champion in disguise. The story becomes one simply of constancy against odds. Other writers may transform the dead lovers, or may place them in Elysium, but Petowe does so without the preceding tragedy that gives weight to the point. Marlowe’s version is already idiosyncratic, but where Chapman shows us how the initial love is doomed, Petowe preserves it. In effect, since he does not accept the constants of the narrative, his protagonists are not Hero and Leander at all, and a run-of-the-mill romance has simply been attached to their names.

12 The English Chapbooks

Petowe’s quasi-medieval romance is not the last treatment of the story in this manner, and it is appropriate, even at the expense of chronology and genre, to consider with his poem the English prose chapbooks, cheap productions for popular use, often with wood-block prints, which appeared in the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century and had a continued currency into the nineteenth. These offer romanticised texts not unlike Petowe’s, though they differ from his version in one notable respect, namely that they do revert (eventually) to the classical tale, taking away again his happy end. Their titles imply that the story was familiar. One text, printed perhaps around 1680 and with prints of the river — in this case the Thames — and ascribed to J. S., gives the entire narrative in its title:

The Famous and Renowned History of the two unfortunate, though noble lovers, Hero and Leander, giving an account of all that happened

from the beginning of their loves, till both of them ended their lives in the sea for love of each other; their various adventures and the renowned atchivements of Leander and his many glorious victorys and successes till he was forbid access to the fair Hero by her cruel father upon his killing a rival in a combat; also how (she being imprisoned in a tower) he swam over the sea to visit her & in a boistrous storm was drowned, for the sorrow of which, she leaped into the waves and drowned herself.⁴⁴

The chapbooks were examined in 1931 by Alice T. Crathern from texts in the British Library and in Harvard (with reference to copies elsewhere), and she describes two distinct strands, with further related texts.⁴⁵ Her first version is that cited above, although she uses a text of it printed in London between 1711 and 1732. Hero is a princess, daughter of Armilius. The warrior Leander sees and falls in love with Hero, and returning secretly to Sestos, rescues her and her father from pirates. Later, her father holds a tournament to which Leander comes in disguise — the later part of Petowe's tale — and defeats the favoured suitor, Altemansor. Leander wins the coronet but gives it to Hero with a letter declaring his love, and then leaves. The original tale is left even further behind with the development of various adventures. Altemansor sends twelve men to kill Leander, he defeats eleven and sends one back. He has also been communicating by letter with Hero — a distant echo of Ovid — aided by Hero's nurse, Amoressa, who is as proactive as the nurse Mantho in Nadal's *Leanderide*. Armilius still wants Hero to marry Altemansor, and even when Leander returns and reveals himself as the man who once saved Armilius, the latter insists that he had given his word. Worse, when after further conflict Altemansor is killed, Hero is promised to the dead prince's brother, and then imprisoned, which does echo Petowe. Aided by the nurse, Leander plans to escape with her, but the narrative now returns (more or less) to the classical story. In a development of one of the many open questions, Leander acquires a boat, but it is lost, so that he is forced to swim to Hero's prison. He drowns, and she throws herself into the sea.

Three additional texts are variations on this version, and the tale in this form clearly lasted as a popular narrative, with printings in various places, including

44 London: Blare, 1680 (?). The text is discussed by Booth, "Hero's Afterlife", p. 8 (with an illustration).

45 Alice T. Crathern, "A Romanticized Version of Hero and Leander", *Modern Language Notes* 46 (1931), 382–5. She gives some justifications for the dates assigned to the versions, but these cannot be precise. There is scope for further examination of these works, and especially of the relationship to Petowe, although rival suitors for Hero, sometimes powerful ones, do crop up in later dramas and operas, for example.

Glasgow.⁴⁶ Crathern's second distinct version is longer, has additional letters between the pair, and renames the nurse. The title offers a direct connection with Ovid by way of Nahum Tate's two *Heroides*, which had appeared in 1680: *Hero and Leander or the Unfortunate Lovers. An Ancient and Esteemed Romance. To which is added Leander's Epistle to Hero and Hero's Answer. Both Translated from Ovid by N. Tate Esq.* This text was printed in London sometime after 1733. The title of a final and much abridged version mentioned by Crathern is again significant: *The Famous History of the two Unfortunate Lovers who Ended their Lives in the Sea for each other.* That title at least summarises the text in its original form.

Petowe may have had little or no resonance in later English literature, but the story of Hero and Leander as a medieval romance seems to have enjoyed some popular success in the two subsequent centuries. The producers of the chapbooks did seem to accept, however, that these were famously *unfortunate* lovers, and unlike Petowe (who was, in all fairness, more consistent), did not claim an unverifiable additional Italian source to justify a happy ending, even if they, like him, added a lot of incidental adventures with usually satisfactory outcomes. It does appear that writers could for a long time please the public at large by offering "Hero and Leander in the worn trappings of medieval romance",⁴⁷ even if those trappings were already worn in Petowe's day.

13 Kaspar von Barth, *Leandridos (Leandris); Heroes Infelices* (1612)

The North German scholar Kaspar (Caspar) von Barth (1587–1658), who had apparently been viewed as a child prodigy, and whose later output in Latin, with some German, was extensive, produced one of the longest versions of the narrative, the *Leandridos*, a neo-classical epic in Latin of more than seventeen hundred Vergilian hexameters in three books, published in his *opuscula varia* in 1612, which also contains the *Heroes Infelices*, in which Hero appears once more, and which will be discussed later. He had translated Musaios into Latin in 1608, with annotations.⁴⁸ He allowed himself a small self-advertisement, in-

46 The (late) copy in the National Library of Scotland in Edinburgh is online and gives a good idea of what these popular booklets looked like.

47 Crathern, "Romanticized Version", p. 385.

48 The text of the *Leandridos* is in the *Opuscula varia* (Hanau: Willer, 1612), pp. 95–148. The books contain 565, 578 and 578 lines respectively. The beautifully printed text (cited here) is digitized at: <https://www2.uni-mannheim.de/mateo/cameda/barth2/jpg/s093.html>, a copy in which line-numbers have been added. The same volume contains the *Heroes Infelices*, pp. 149–80, with the Hero poem (discussed below) on pp. 152–4. Jellinek, *Sage*,

cidentally, in an epigram entitled “In Leandrida C. Barthii” found in a collection which he published under the pseudonym of Tarraeus Hebius:

Hero pulcra fuit, formoso flore Leander
In Cantore nihil carpere Momus habet.

(On Barth's *Leandridos*. Hero was beautiful, Leander handsome, and in the singer the Critics have nothing to complain about.)⁴⁹

Barth's *Leandridos* acknowledges Musaios regularly without following the text particularly closely, and echoes Ovid as well. It is full of classical learning, all elaborately displayed in a mannered style; the Hellespont positively overflows with deities, demigods, nymphs, and dolphins as required. Both the presentation and moral import matches that of Chapman, with whom he has been compared. For Barth, the classical familiarity of the story is underlined by regular references to its outcome in all three books (even as early as I, 174–81), so that there is no question of suspense, although details are varied a little. The work is, as Jellinek makes clear, overblown, repetitive, and notably limited on dialogue (though not on apostrophe and declamatory rhetoric); the absence of dialogue might of course reflect Ovid's approach. Jellinek also points out Barth's regular claims that he will keep his narrative short on a given point, but then singularly fails to do so.

After an introduction, the scene-setting concentrates on the locations in Europe and Asia, presented in detail and returned to regularly. Hero is the most beautiful of all the women of Sestos, descended from Jove himself, and she was dedicated as a priestess from the cradle. Leander is noble and skilled in the activities that Ovid has Hero mention, he hears about Hero and falls in love with the virgin of Sestos before he sees her. The second book opens with the festival, at which Leander arrives standing at the stern of the ship and singing the tale of Phrixos and Helle. References continue in this book to the lamp,

pp. 28–37 and 84–6 discusses the work in detail and provides a German summary of the text. Barth is known for his Latin translation of Fernando de Roja's *Celestina*, and the text of this, *Pornoboscodidasculus Latinus* (Frankfurt: Wechel, 1624) also contains not only the *Leandridos* but his Latin text of Musaios; see Faber du Faur, *German Baroque Literature*, p. 23. On Barth see Wilhelm Kühlmann, “Neo-Latin Literature in Early Modern Germany”, in: *Early Modern German Literature 1350–1700*, ed. Max Reinhart (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2007), pp. 281–329, esp. pp. 287 and 296.

49 *Amphitheatrum Seriorum Jocosum Libris XXX Epigrammatum constructum* (Hanover: Henne, 1613), book XVIII, epigram xlvii, p. 295. The Mannheim digitised copy of the *Leandridos* has this epigram handwritten on the first page.

the sea, and the fire of love which will kill Leander. He falls in love with the virgin priestess (they are *virgo* and *iuvēnis* throughout), comes to the temple where they exchange chaste kisses, and then he leaves.

In the third book, Leander returns, following the lamp which Hero has set. She is beset by shame, but suddenly from her otherwise silent lips comes the single (Ovidian) word *veni*, come (III, 235). Leander must still leave *nec zona soluta est* (with her girdle still unloosened, III, 249), but claims that he would be ashamed not to come back, because this would mean breaking his word. In this final attempt the winds extinguish the light and Leander is drowned: “*Ignis ubi perit, vincunt freta saeva Leandrum*” (the light dies and the cruel waves conquer Leander, III, 442). Hero finds his broken body and embarks on a long farewell speech (something which Jellinek condemns as a serious lapse of taste⁵⁰), cursing the day, the place, and fate, before she drowns herself, wishing that their ashes might be combined after death. Indeed, their parents do arrange that “*marmor habet cinereis unum, una inscriptio binos*” (one urn has their ashes, the two have one memorial inscription, III, 555). Barth turns at the end, however, to his reasons for telling the tale,⁵¹ which is as a warning aimed at young men (we recall that the work has only Leander in its title):

Mens mihi non haec est, molleis seducere Ephebos
A venerandarum virtutum semita, in altas
Erronum tenebras ...
Sed magis exemplum fugiendi ponere amoris
insidias et tela, modis fallentia miris. (III, 562–9)

(My intention is not to seduce young men by soft words from the narrow pathway of the virtues which are to be revered into the deep dark of error ... but rather to provide an exemplary tale of how to flee from the astonishingly deceitful traps and arrows of love.)

The tale is once more a warning to susceptible young men (*ephebi*) that love can be dangerous. Leander was far too ready to love, and we are regularly reminded that he died because of it. Hero, for all her descent from the gods and

50 *Sage*, p. 35. Barth is not particularly unusual in this, however, and as Jellinek himself points out, von Hohberg does much the same thing. Other writers have similarly failed to resist the temptation for a *planctus* at this point.

51 Gordon, “Poet as Classicist”, p. 129, cites the passage and compares this with Chapman’s general moral.

her operatic farewell, is ultimately little more than a prop for the moral, even if they are duly buried in one place.

Barth allowed Hero to reprise her farewell in his *Heroes Infelices*, unfortunate heroes. This is a short collection of poetic declarations, the famous last words of legendary and historical figures, including Dido, Medea, and Thisbe as well as characters from Homer, Roman emperors and others. The second of these is about Hero, sixty-four lines, fifty-two of which give her, the *infortunatissima Virgo* (57, most unfortunate virgin) a similar but shorter final complaint, again cursing the perfidious lamp and so on. Earlier texts — such as Marlowe's — offer an obligatory curse upon the day of the lovers' first meeting, but it is rarely done at such length. The final line mentions again that a single tomb contains the united bodies of the lovers.

14 Giovanni Capponi, *Gli amore infelici di Leandro, e d'Ero. Idillio*
(1618)

The Italian verse idyll by Giovanni Capponi (1586–1628) is again based on Musaios, who is invoked, as is Bernardo Tasso.⁵² It is worthy of consideration in view of its form, in short lines not unlike the Spanish romances, and in content-development, because Hero's father plays more of a part, albeit largely off-stage. The nurse protects her from his awareness of her activities, and Hero asks for his pardon at the catastrophe. As an indication of the style, the sea-nymphs, as often happens, are much taken with the naked Leander as he swims:

Le Nimfe di quell'onde
Visto il bel corpo ignudo,
Che vincea di bianchezza
Gli Avori, e gli Alabastri,
Nel più riposto seno
De lor profondi alberghi
Sentir fiamma d'amore ... (p. 23)

(The nymphs of the waves, seeing the fine naked body, the whiteness of which surpassed both ivory and alabaster, in the hidden wombs of their deep dwellings felt the flame of love.)

52 Giovanni Capponi, *Gli amore infelici di Leandro, e d'Ero. Idillio* (Venice: G.-B. Ciotti, 1618) cited by page (online).

Autumn brings bad weather to the Hellespont, and on the final night, the wind blows out the flame, “E col lume lo spirto/ De la vita nuotante” (p. 32, and with the light, the very spirit of the swimmer’s life), again a familiar line. However, when Hero takes her own life she begs forgiveness:

Perdona à la tua Figlia,
 Ò Genitor pietoso,
 L’eccesso incontenente,
 Mà non già scelerato.
 Moro. (p. 35)

(Forgive your daughter, most pious father — for uncontained excess, but not for wickedness. I die....)

The people of Sestos and of Abydos mourn, as indeed do all the peoples of the Hellespont (a motif which recurs in later texts) and there is a fully described funeral. If there is a moral, it is in Hero’s request for forgiveness for excess, but not wickedness, and the love is celebrated afterwards, as it is in a story which has endured from the time of Musaios.

15 **Gabriel Bocángel y Unzueta, *Leandro y Hero. Poema Heroyco* (1627)**

The Spanish courtier and poet Gabriel Bocángel (1603–58) composed his poetic version in 104 Castilian ottava rima stanzas of hendecasyllables, dedicated to another Golden Age scholar-poet (and in this case also a painter), Juan Martínez de Jáuregui y Aguilar (1583–1641). It appeared in a collection of *Rimas y Prosas* published in Madrid in 1627, prefaced with a substantial number of poems by various hands, often rather stylised sonnets, praising Bocángel and his poem, with plays on his name as ‘voice of an angel’.⁵³

53 *Rimas y Prosas ivnto con la Fabvla de Leandro e Ero*. Por Don Gabriel Bocangel y Unzueta (Madrid: González, 1627), and online (Bibliotheca Digital Hispánica). Early versions often have laudatory poems by other hands, but the number here is large. Those praising Bocángel include Francisco López de Zárate (1580–1658), who himself wrote about the theme, Juan de Velasco de la Cueva (1608–50), and the interesting Miguel de Silveira (ca 1580–ca 1640–50). The (cited) text is in Moya del Baño, *El Tema*, pp. 254–70 (without the panegyric verses), and in her discussion, p. 19f., attention is drawn to the work of Jáuregui and Góngora. Krummrich has a translation. On the writer, see José María de Cossío, *Fabulas mitológicas en España* (Madrid: ISTMO, 1998), pp. 568–76, and Isabel Torres, “A Small Boat over an Open Sea? Gabriel Bocángel’s *Fábula de Leandro y Hero*

The work opens with an extended invocation to Melpomene, muse of tragedy, then an address to Jáuregui and his skills as poet and artist. The main influence is again Musaios, with Ovidian echoes. The classical background is thorough: the Europe and Asia point is made more than once, and there are references not only to Phrixos and Helle but to the Persian defeat, all this emphasising the antiquity of the story. The gods, the winds, and the fates are all named.

Hero is a priestess, and there is an extended description of the temple before the pair meet; the fire (a recurrent theme) of their instant and mutual love is stressed, although Hero protests her status: (*virgen soy, virgen noble*), to which Leander counters with his own nobility, and addresses her as a goddess on earth. Their love is consummated and Hero, as she sets out the torch for Leander to follow, is “a la noche mujer, virgen al dia” (a wife at night and a virgin by day, giving Musaios 287 in reverse order), since she still acts as priestess. When winter comes, however, the four winds and the forces of the sea bring about the death of Leander. Hero sees his body, and now accepts her own fate as inevitable, on terms set by Apollo, “que no pudo morir Leandro solo” (that Leander cannot die alone). She throws herself from the tower, and

... sigue y lanza
al triste esposo en Aberno oscuro,
todo el mar los sepulta, todo el viento
y al merido aun la falta monumento.

(follows her tragic husband, plunging into the dark regions of the underworld, only the sea buries them, only the wind; and their virtue has no monument.)

Bocángel does not even have them buried in the same tomb, and this abruptness is striking. His paradoxical conclusion, though, is to promise the most realistic posthumous unity for them. The sea and the winds may be their grave, but the story itself is their memorial. This version is longer than that of Musaios, and it adds erudite elements and extended passages, but it offers a well-made and not over-elaborated positive version of the tale. Hero and Leander are tragic victims, but also worthy illustrations of coping with the fire of love.

and Epic Aspiration”, in her: *The Polyphemus Complex* (Liverpool: UP, 2006 = *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 83/2), pp. 131–63.

16 Francisco de Trillo y Figueroa, *Fábula de Leandro Heroica* (1652)

Various Spanish romance and quasi-romance versions of the story appeared in the seventeenth century. Those by Góngora and Quevedo are parodistic, but the Castilian poet Francisco de Trillo (1618–80) produced a version in approaching four hundred lines which is already different in feel from the neo-classical poem by Bocángel.⁵⁴ As is usual in romance versions, we are given no detailed background, and the Hellespont, though dividing Sestos and Abydos, is not presented in learned fashion as the grave of Helle, nor because it divides Asia and Europe, but simply to imply that the lovers must choose between homeland or love (*patrias de uno y otro amante*).

The text proper begins with the first completely fixed element of the narrative, that Leander is placing his life at risk, throwing himself into the sea for the love of Hero,

Ero, aquella en cuyas aras
ardía lascivo encienso
el corazón de Leandro
con religioso silencio

(Hero, on whose altar the heart of Leander was inflamed with ardent desire in religious silence.)

The quasi-religious tone persists, and there is much on the flames of love, and the contrast of fire and water. References to the gods, the fates and natural forces all echo Ovid (and the dolphin motif is also present), without this overloading the narrative. The unity of the pair is stressed:

Recibe en dos voluntades
dos sacrificios que ofrezco
por dos almas, reducidas
hoy a un mismo sentimiento.

(Take in two wills two sacrifices offered by two souls, reduced now to one and the same feeling.)

54 Moya del Baño has the text, *El Tema*, pp. 287–95. It is not in Krummrich. On the poet see Cossío, *Fabulas mitológicas*, pp. 657–60. There is a print edition of the works by Antonio Gallego Morell, *Obras de Don Francisco de Trillo y Figueroa* (Madrid: Instituto de Filología Hispánica, 1951).

The theme of offering on an altar is brought out again in the summary. This has been the tale of how “en las aras de Venus/ sacrificadas dos vidas” (two lives were sacrificed on the altar of Venus). As with other romances, the story is presented without a moral.

17 José Jerónimo Valmaseda y Zarzosa, *Romance de Leandro y Ero*
(1660)

The romance by the virtually unknown Valmaseda, whose work is recorded in 1660 and who also wrote on other mythological themes, is very brief, giving the story in only five quatrains, although it does cover much of the tale.⁵⁵ The poem is concerned ostensibly with Leander’s daring (*osadia*) attempt to defeat the elements, and it ends with the death of Hero, done very simply, but with a memorable turn of phrase:

Ero, que su ausencia llora
en la contrapuesta orilla
por morir mas que Leandro
de ausencia y de pena espira.

(Hero, who weeps for his absence on the opposite shore, to die just as much as Leander, dies from absence and from grief.)

18 Wolfgang Helmhard Freiherr von Hohberg, *Die unvergnügte Proserpina, III* (1661)

Wolfgang von Hohberg (1612–88) was an Austrian Protestant who moved to Regensburg in Germany. He was a member of the linguistic and poetic group known as the *Fruchtbringende Gesellschaft*, the fruitful society, and unlike many of the poets writing in German in the baroque period, wrote epic poetry rather than drama or lyrics, including an historical romance of almost forty thousand lines. An equally large mythological work, *Die unvergnügte Proserpina*, “Unhappy Proserpina/Persephone”, in twelve books, was published in Regensburg in 1661, and the story of Hero and Leander takes up most of the

55 Moya del Baño, *El Tema*, p. 295f. (with letters in his name transposed). See de Cossío, *Fabulas mitológicas*, p. 240f. Virtually nothing is known about him; he may have come from Andalusia, possibly Huelva.

third book. It is told in nearly a thousand alexandrines, in couplets with alternating feminine and masculine endings.⁵⁶ Von Hohberg's current obscurity is not entirely inexplicable; in spite of a sound classical background, his version is not entirely cohesive, but it is not without merit. There are some striking individual passages, and it focuses upon the separate psychology of the protagonists as presented in the *Heroides*, placing it within the immediate narrative of Leander's final attempt to cross the Hellespont. Ovid, Musaios and Martial are all echoed, and at the end the poet uses the *Metamorphoses* to turn the legend into a myth with his development of the problematic notion of death as a union rather than a parting. The deaths of the couple are more prominent here than their actual relationship, although sometimes ingenious answers are provided to questions of why and how the relationship comes about.

The starting point for this embedded narrative is a picture seen by Proserpina of the Hellespont, a body of water nine hundred paces wide, separating Asia and Europe, and the background for a story of two constant lovers, a story well known even within its (neo-)classical context. Hero is a priestess of Venus, and her father, Coloander, is warned in a dream that her beauty could present a danger (an earlier version of this prophecy motif is found in a sixteenth-century Flemish drama). She is accordingly locked up in her tower ("versperrt/in disen Thurn hinein", 39v) and her father keeps the key. As part of this scene-setting, we are told that the tower has two windows.

We move now to Leander, a young man skilled at all the activities of which Hero is so envious in Ovid, and who is accustomed to hunting and to sailing or swimming the Hellespont. One day, whilst hunting birds, he crosses from Abydos, and finds himself by Hero's tower. Hohberg thus combines the reason behind the clandestine love with an explanation of its origins. Hero hears him and comes to the window, he sees her, falls in love at first sight and so, we

56 On von Hohberg see Faber du Faur, *German Baroque Literature*, pp. 166–8. The text, with the author given only as "ein Mitglied der Hoch-Löbl. Fruchtbringenden Gesellschaft" a member of the society, was printed by Christoff Fischer in Regensburg in 1661 and has been digitized by the Bavarian State Library (BSB) in Munich at: reader.digitale-sammlungen.de/resolve/display/bsb10111456.html. The book has numbered leaves, the third book occupying 36v–54r. The Hero and Leander narrative runs from 38v to 53r. I retain the variable spelling and capitalization of the period but resolve the slash (/) as a comma, to avoid confusion with modern usage to indicate a line-end. The relationship of the story of the rest of the work and the other classical tales is a separate issue. Jellinek, *Sage*, pp. 37–40 discusses the work in fairly, if not entirely, positive terms (naming the author Hohenberg). Except for a Vienna dissertation (by A. Krutiak) in 1935, the work has rarely been discussed even by specialists in German baroque literature; Karl F. Otto, *Die Sprachgesellschaften des 17. Jahrhunderts* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1972), pp. 26f. and 32 has a few references.

are told, his tragedy begins. He addresses Hero as a goddess, again realising Ovid, and begs forgiveness for his trespass. Her love for him is similarly ignited (“die lieb auß seinem Blicken/ Sie gleichsfals auch bewegt”, the love in his eyes moved her in just the same way, 40v) but she explains her position. The festival of Venus follows (now following Musaios), and the arrangement is made that Leander will swim across to her. The situation is spelt out very thoroughly:

Dem Jüngling, weil er ist wol abgericht im schwimmen
 wil Hero bey der Nacht schon rechte zeit bestimmen
 wann sie gelegenheit zu warten seiner hatt
 außstecken Ihm ein Liecht, das drüben am Gestatt
 Zu mercken leichtlich ist; (41v)

(Hero, to indicate when she has a chance to receive him, will set out a light at night which can easily be seen from the other shore for the young man, since he is a good swimmer.)

Both desire the love, and the visits, the poet tells us (with a hint that the ending will be tragic) continue for some time, until we come to the final swim. A full description of the dark night and stormy sea is intermingled with a closer examination of Leander’s state of mind, and the fears and frustrations as expressed in the letter in Ovid when he cannot swim are here again made direct. From the sea, too, Leander challenges Boreas as in Ovid, and echoes Martial by asking the gods to kill him on his return journey. Faced with the storm and the darkness spread by Hecate (a motif which also recurs in the tradition), Leander hesitates three times before venturing into the sea, but can make out the light, and feels that Hero will think badly of him if she does not come. His approach is fatalistic, however: “Die Flamme meinr Lieb ist gnugsam unverzehren/ Ist sterben ein Gesetz, so müssen wirs erfüllen” (42r–v, the flame of my love burns strongly enough. If death is a law, then we must obey it). The tone is elegiac; Leander wants only to see Hero once more, and the implied accusation in Ovid of Hero’s guilt is not made.

The mutability and unpredictability of the sea, which will cause Leander’s death while his love for Hero remains constant, are part of a key theme in the German baroque, the poetry of the age of the Thirty Years War, itself an equally unpredictable and dangerous force: constancy in the face of ever-changing adversity. Hohberg stresses the treachery of the waves, whilst showing us how Leander regularly imagines he sees the light, or that the storm is easing when it is not. Leander makes huge efforts for small progress, and Hohberg’s descriptions of how the waves rise and turn into a whirlpool are not just effective as

poetry but probably one of the more accurate descriptions of the currents in the Hellespont. Leander is driven off course in the blinding *Nebelrauch* (44v), smoky mist, and cannot even lift his head to look for the guiding light. As he nears his end, Leander declares that he is in any case not worthy of Hero ("Ich zwar bekenne gern, Ich bin nicht Ihrer wehrt," 45v), but his final comfort is that they will be together in Elysium:

Nun Hero gute Nacht, glücklich euch bewahren
 die Götter, und wann Ihr vielleicht nun habt erfahren
 daß meine Junge zeit im Wasser sich geendt
 so glaubt daß eine Flamm in mir noch dennoch brennt.
 Kein Wind sie tilgen kan, kein Wasser soll es machen
 daß sie verleschen wird ... (45v)

(Now Hero, good night! May the gods preserve you in happiness, and when perhaps you discover that my young life has ended in the waters, then believe that there is a flame which is still burning within me. No wind can extinguish it, no water can put it out ...)

The concentration is on the inextinguishable flame of love and the extinguishing of the guiding light is not, at least apparently, an issue. Leander's last word is "Hero", and his body is thrown eventually onto the shore near her tower.

Only now do we discover what happened to the torch: Hero had lit it, then extinguished it because she became afraid for Leander, and did not want him to attempt the journey after all. This again realises her hesitations and wavering in Ovid, and the same set of actions are found in other versions. The motif allows the poet to display Hero's mental anguish in a sequence of fears: has he or has he not set out? Has he drowned? ("Doch will Ich glauben nicht", 45v, but I do not want to believe that! — that comment is applied in the medieval German poem to her fears of a possible rival in love). Surely he would not endanger himself for my sake, or permit his peril to distress me? Why did I not let the light burn longer? With this, she does light the torch again, but it is of course now too late. Hero scans the sea, persuading herself that he did not make the attempt. She has no companion, so that her fears are unshared.

The treatment of the lamp or torch-motif is slightly ambiguous. The feeling is that the darkness of the night and the storm, which blew Leander off course, were such that he could never have reached Sestos, and the fogs sent by Hecate ensure that he can see nothing in any case. Only the fact that Hero lit the torch, which inspired him to make the attempt lest she think badly of

him, places any guilt upon her. Leander certainly does not blame her, so that her self-accusation, both for lighting and extinguishing the torch, is intensified.

As a prelude to Hero seeing the corpse of Leander on the shore Hohberg introduces an extended and (to modern ears) awkward image of a nightingale returning to its nest to feed its chicks, only to find them gone. Leander might not have imputed any guilt, but Hero takes it fully upon herself:

Und ist er meinethalb im wilden Meer verdorben
 Er ist auß grosser Lieb und meiner Schuld gestorben
 Ich Ich bin Ursach nur, hett ich das falsche Licht
 nicht (leider) angesteckt, Er wer ertruncken nicht (49r)

(For my sake he perished in the wild sea, he died for great love and through my guilt. I, I am the sole cause: had I not lit, alas, that deceitful light, he would not have drowned.)

She stresses her guilt repeatedly in her lengthy lamentation (which Jellinek compares with that in Barth's poem, pointing out that it is at least shorter) referring to Leander's death even as *disen Mord*, this murder. Her own resolution to die is clear: "Ein Grab uns decken sol", a single grave shall cover us. Echoing Leander's comments, she prays: "Gerechter Himmel schaff, daß unsre keusche Seelen/ dort in Elysien zusammen sich vermählen" (49v, just heaven, allow our chaste souls to be married in Elysium). The formulation is interesting, a prayer to heaven, rather than the gods, asking for the pagan paradise; and their souls are chaste because of the fidelity between them. Despising life, she leaps into the sea from her tower.

Here the story changes, however, adding to the hoped-for eternal union in the Elysian Fields a double metamorphosis, though not into goldfinches or pine-trees. A water-nymph with the plausibly classical-looking name Cymothöe, who has come to deal with the corpse of Leander, hears Hero fall into the sea, and pulls her out, placing her by Leander. Hero is still alive, and the nymph assures her that they will indeed be together in Elysium. Hero dies, but when the nymph returns with two naiads the bodies have vanished. Leander has been turned into a tree and Hero into a well or a spring. The sexual imagery is obvious, but this is a blessing from the gods on the constant lovers, and a further assurance that they are indeed joined for all eternity. The tree produces shade for the well, from whose source it drinks, and then showers it with white flowers. The words of the nymph — *o Leander* — of course provides the name of the tree, which Hohberg feels the need to spell out: "daher man

disen Baum noch Oleander nennt" (52v, and therefore this tree is still called oleander).

The overall effect is hard to judge, even setting aside the fact that this is a tale within a larger structure. Some elements do not really work. The image of the nightingale is clumsy, and the ending is more than a little contrived, although the poet is concerned to do more than have the pair simply united in death. The descriptive passages are good, however, and the separate psychological presentations during the crisis are effective. Leander's submission to fate and Hero's guilt are well-drawn, but the overall theme is constancy against mutability as their love contrasts with the treacherously changeable sea.

19 **Ignacio de Luzán Cláramunt de Suelves y Gurrea, *Ero y Leandro*.
Idilio anacreontico (1770)**

Although there are differences, it is possible to bracket with Bocángel's version (as Francisca Moya del Baño does) the "anacreontic idyll" of about a century later by Ignacio de Luzán (1702–54), first published in 1770 in the *Parnaso Español* published by López de Sedano.⁵⁷ It is comparable, too, with the Italian idyll by Giovanni Capponi. Luzán produced a neo-classical poem not unlike the earlier *romancero* versions (though with a slightly different verse form), but with a deliberately elevated presentation. Luzán was a literary theorist concerned principally, in fact, with drama, but as a neo-classicist he stressed especially the *utile-dulce* requirements of poetry as exemplary and moral, as in the roughly contemporary philosophical ballad, and this work might appropriately have been considered beside Schiller's version. Luzán's *Ero y Leandro* displays classical knowledge and tells the story in less than a hundred heptasyllabic quatrains, a concise form used here to advantage. Despite J. M. Cohen's judgment that Luzán's "poetry aimed at dignity, but achieved only dullness", the idyll has considerable merit.⁵⁸ The story is told simply, and the directive

57 Moya del Baño, *El Tema*, has the text on pp. 296–303 (cited by quatrain, though she gives no numbers); she discusses it on pp. 124–30, pointing out the classical allusions. It is not in Krummrich. It first appeared in the nine-volume collection edited by Juan José López de Sedano (1729–1801) under the title *Parnaso Español* between 1768 and 1778 (online). The text is in vol. 11 (Madrid: Ibarra and de Sancha, 1770), pp. 162–74. The piece, sometimes with emendations, can be found in other places online.

58 In his entry on the poet in *The Penguin Companion to Literature 2, European Literature*, ed. Anthony Thorlby (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1969), p. 493. But see the study by Ivy C. McClelland, *Ignacio de Luzán* (New York: Twayne, 1973).

comments of the poet-narrator are sometimes striking, especially in the setting of Venus against Cupid.

As in Musaios, the work opens with an invocation to the muse to tell the story of how Leander lost his life, although the lamp is not prominent. Leander is vigorous and athletic, Hero is beautiful, and is also a priestess of the temple. Seeing her, Leander voices the familiar point that she is a goddess, though mortal; this is done with a classical display of the various locations associated with Venus, including the home of the Praxiteles image:

Gran diosa de Citeres
de Páfos y de Gnído
esta mortal belleza
es tu traslado vivo. (17)

(Great goddess of Cythera, of Paphos and of Cnidos, in this mortal beauty you are brought to life.)

Venus hears these words “y decretaron ambos/ venganzas y castigos” (19, and declared that there would be both vengeance and punishment). This prompts the narrator to pose the philosophical question that lies at the very heart of a story based on the conflict between the goddess of love as an absolute, to whom Hero is supposed to dedicate herself completely, and her son, Cupid, whose arrows are the cause of mortal and physical love. Luzán recognises the desire on the part of Venus for domination as a counter to the treacherous capriciousness of Cupid and his darts. The distinction is more complex than in those works where Leander (and others) assume that the goddess of love must approve of physical love. The narrator sets the problem as a question:

Digame el que conozca
a Vénus y á Cupido
si es más cruel la madre
o es más cruel el hijo. (21)

(Tell me, anyone who knows about Venus and Cupid, whether the mother is more cruel, or whether the son is more cruel.)

This is part of a broader topos, of course, in which Venus and Cupid/Amor are routinely condemned in general terms. There is a song by the German poet and composer Jacob Regnart (ca 1540–1599) called ‘Venus du vnd dein kind’ which condemns both for being blind and making lovers blind. The speaker advises

the listener to avoid love, because both Venus and Amor offer a thousand times more pain than pleasure. The refrain is that the speaker has learned this lesson “In meinen jungen Jahren”, when I was young. Here Luzán poses the generally expressed question at the reader, who now observes in a specific instance the fire of love which will devour both Hero and Leander. This gives rise to another unanswered question:

Un fuego que es veneno
un fuego que es martirio
Si es martirio y veneno
¿cómo es apetecido? (25)

(A fire which is poison, a fire which is martyrdom. If it is martyrdom and poison, how can it be desired?)

The topos of love as something desired but destructive is another familiar topos, the fever longing still for that which longer nurseth the disease.⁵⁹

Her parents keep Hero in the tower, “Más, contra amor ¿que muro/ será seguro asilo?” (28, but against love, what wall could provide a safe haven?). Leander returns to Abydos, then swims to Hero with the lantern as a guide, having thrown off his clothes on the shore at nightfall, to enjoy a night of love. He is welcomed by Hero: “Ven, esposo’ — le dice/ ‘e llega a los brazos míos’” (53, come, O husband, come to my arms). Eventually, however, the seven dark nights of the *Heroides* leave Leander impatient, he swims, but the light is extinguished, and his words, as in many Spanish sonnets, are Martial’s:

Ondas, si darme muerte
es decreto preciso
no a la ida, a la vuelta
matadme a vuestro arbitrio (78)

(Waves, if you bring me death it must not be when I am on my way, but on the return kill me at your will.)

59 For Regnart’s poem, which is not about Hero and Leander, see *Dichtung aus Österreich. Versepiik und Lyrik II. Lyrik*, ed. Eugen Thurnherr (Vienna: Österreichischer Bundesverlag, 1976), p. 143, from the collected *Teutsche Lieder*, published in Munich in 1611 (Regnart worked in Innsbruck). The Shakespeare line is from Sonnet 147.

Placing it at this point — as others have done — adds force to the vain request. He dies calling Hero's name three times, his corpse is washed up and Hero kills herself (without protracted action or comment), finding “en la muerte sa alivio” (her relief in death). Venus's laws have been broken by Hero, just as Leander has insulted the goddess. But the pair are now united and are mourned by Sestos and Abydos. The story becomes known far and wide, and this version ends with the statement that “el trágico suceso/ cantata el peregrino” (the tragic event is sung by pilgrims).

Luzán presents the story with classical dignity. There are no scenes of frantic impatience on Leander's part and his death-scene is not overdone (there is a contrast here with the romantic and in this case literal *Sturm und Drang* of Schiller's poem), nor are we shown inner anguish on Hero's part as she waits for him, and then accepts death as her only possibility. The survivors mourn “Hero y Leandro unidos” (Hero and Leander united, 86), but there is no further comment as the pair pass directly into literary fame through the pilgrim's song. Luzán shapes the narrative according to a classical ideal, pared and balanced, without side-issues (such as an inserted tale, even that of Helle and Phrixos). The absence of other gods or personified elements of nature allows us to focus on the central question: which is more cruel, the vengeful Venus, punishing Leander's lover's hubris in putting Hero on the same level as her, or the caprice of Cupid, whose arrows can — and here do — set up a fire which can be poison and martyrdom (the choice of word is striking), but which is nevertheless so greatly desired.

20 Carl Ehregott Mangelsdorf, *Hero und Leander. Ein prosaisch Gedicht* (1769)

It is not easy to know where in the tradition to place the prose-poem by Carl Ehregott Andreas Mangelsdorf (1748–1802), a North German classical scholar who ultimately became professor of rhetoric and history at Königsberg. The text, which he wrote while still a student at Leipzig in 1769 (it was published in 1770 with a preface dated January 1, and is thus almost exactly contemporary with Luzán), is over fifty pages long, and it looks at first glance almost like a novella, albeit one with occasional classical footnotes. On the title page, however, it is called “ein prosaisch Gedicht”, a prose poem, with the final word in capitals even larger even than those used for the title of the work itself.

The author's own name is found only at the end of a dedicatory preface to the Freiherr von Zehmen, in which Mangelsdorf explains his intentions with

the work.⁶⁰ It reads for the most part as if it were a prose translation of a classical poem, although occasional contemporary references and comments indicate that this is a consciously neo-classical work. But it is divided into *Gesänge*, cantos, uses a poetic style, images, parallels and other classical allusions, and invokes the muse, so that its designation as a prose-poem is justified, notwithstanding those scholarly footnotes. Sometimes listed as a translation of Musaios, this is most certainly not one, and is, moreover, worth reading, because it is a deliberate reaction to the Greek poem. Mangelsdorf says very clearly in the introduction that “Ich habe mich erkühnt den Plan des griechischen Dichters zu ändern, oder vielmehr zu einem Neuen umzuschaffen” (I have been so bold as to change the outline of the Greek writer, or rather, to turn it into a new one). Musaios, he says, tells the received tale, but this seems to be lacking the moral dimension demanded by classical writers such as Horace. “Die Moral scheint hierbey am meisten zu verlieren, welche doch nach dem Zeugnisse des Horaz, ein wesentlich Stück des Poeten ausmachen soll” (Here the moral seems most clearly to be lost, and that, according to Horace, should be an essential element for a poet). *Prodesse*, then, as well as *delectare*. Mangelsdorf realises, however, that there are problems inherent in the narrative, which means he must give it “ein anderes Kleid”, a new dress. “Hero ist tugendhaft,” he tells us, “bis Amor die Beleidigung seiner Mutter zu rächen, sie zu dem traurigen Werkzeuge seiner Rache erwählt”. (Hero is virtuous until Cupid, to avenge the insult to his mother, chooses her as the sad weapon for his vengeance.) Venus, too, must be shown as the goddess of chaste love, which he considers was her original role, and this is explained in the first canto. For all that, he will still adhere to the constants of the story, though drawing on other Latin works, such as the *Aeneid*, he tells us, for the death scene.

Luzán debated whether Venus or Cupid was more cruel, and Mangelsdorf sets up a conflict between the two as a basis for his narrative in his first canto, explaining that prefatory comment about revenge. Venus (various names are used, some less familiar, like Acidalia) is angry that the beautiful Psyche seems to be drawing her worshippers away from her, and orders Cupid/Amor to kill her. Instead he falls in love with her and, assuming mortal shape, carries her off and lives with her in a kind of earthly paradise. This also angers

60 *Hero und Leander. Ein prosaisch Gedicht* (Leipzig: Müller, 1770). Online from the Berlin Staatsbibliothek. The preface (the first dozen pages of the book) is not paginated, but the rest of the work is (pp. 13–71), and page-references are given. The dedicatee is probably Adolf Carl Alexander Lothar, Freiherr von Zehmen (1729–1801), although that aristocratic family produced others with the same title at that time, such as his brother, Friedrich Carl Ernst (1720–1798); both had privy councillor (*Geheimrat*) status. A third brother was prince-bishop of Eichstätt.

Venus, and — like the tale of Apollo and Daphnis, the beauty turned into a laurel at the beginning of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, which is invoked here — she captures Psyche while Cupid is asleep. He calls for her in vain as all nature weeps with him for his loss. He appeals to Jupiter, who claims, however, that Venus — who boasts that Psyche is in her power — had tricked a promise from him to help, even though all the gods sympathize. Cupid declares that he will take his vengeance, and looks at the mortal world, noting the worshippers of Venus at Sestos. “Cythaere, zu lange küßt der Erdkreis dein unerbittliches Zepter” (29, Venus, the world has kissed your inescapable sceptre for too long), he claims, and “lächelte trotzig”, smiled nastily, as he goes to Sestos. His intent is to make Hero his weapon against his mother: you selected your priestess, he says, and now he will ensure that she will “die geweihten Opfer entheiligen; in diesem Tempel soll sie die beschwornen Gelübden brechen, hingesunken in die Arme eines verblendeten Jüngling” (desecrate the sacrifice; in this temple she will break her sworn vows, sunk in the arms of a bedazzled youth). Through this “nie gehörte That”, unheard-of deed, Venus's own deity will be desecrated, and people will turn from worshipping at her altars. (29f.) Thus ends the explanatory first canto; the charm is wound up.

The second canto is set in the temple, but in his description Mangelsdorf, while still using poetic language, steps out of time somewhat: “Die ehrwürdige Einfalt des Römern mit der unnachahmlichen Pracht des Griechen verbunden, fordert jedes Auge zur Bewunderung auf”. (31, The noble simplicity of Rome, combined with the inimitable glory of Greece calls forth admiration from every onlooker). Venus (Acidalie) is on a golden altar, surrounded by images of the poets, Sappho, Theocritus, Moschus, Alcaeus and Pindar, and the Romans, Horace, Catullus and Propertius. Neither Musaios nor Ovid, who will write the story later, is named. The whole is a temple to Venus, but also to classical literature. Hero, the high priestess (*Oberpriesterin*) whom Venus herself chose, appears *gleich einer Göttin* (35), like a goddess, but when the solemn ceremony begins there is a sudden earth-tremor which shakes the temple. The device to ensure that Hero and Leander are alone in the temple is an interesting one, a serious counterpart to Paul Scarron's seventeenth-century burlesque when the temple is cleared because of Hero's father's impious snores. Hero commands everyone to leave and to purify themselves against the anger of the great goddess, but Amor has been lying in wait, and as Hero turns from the altar he inflames a “youth from Abydos”, who is not yet named, with love for her. That youth does not leave the temple, and Amor urges him to be resolute and promises him success. Leander, now named for the first time, throws himself at Hero's feet, but she upbraids him for profaning the temple, saying, with dramatic irony, “kennst du die strenge Nemesis nicht?” (42, are you not

aware of strict Nemesis?). However, Amor now fires his arrow — described as an arrow of revenge (against his mother, we recall) — at her, “und schnell verbreitete der von der Rache beflügelte Pfeil sein unheilbares Gifft in der unbewachten Brust der keuschen Priesterin” (44, and the arrow, sped on its way by vengeance, quickly spread its incurable poison in the unguarded breast of the chaste priestess).

Leander is now able *mit sophistischen Schlüssen* (45, with subtle rhetorical arguments) to win her round, even though she tries — for his sake now — to persuade him to flee, because she is dedicated to Venus. Countering this, he argues that their love is the will of the gods (he invokes Zeus and his relationship with Danaë) and tells her: “Folge die Triebe der Natur” (48, follow nature’s urges). He says that he will that night swim across the Hellespont. This convinces her: if he is brave enough to do so, then he must be worthy. She will set a torch as a guide, and her slave-girl will wait on the shore and bring Leander to her. The pair, however, are subordinate within the narrative because both are pawns of the conflict between Venus and Cupid. The question of relative cruelty posed by Luzán is made real. But if Hero and Leander are simply playthings of the gods, they themselves are unaware of this. Hero still struggles with her conscience and warns of Nemesis; Leander, taught by Cupid, uses rhetoric to woo the maid, and they succumb finally to natural urges. Mangelsdorf’s device of an earth-tremor to clear the temple of all but the transfixed Leander works on a basic narrative level, but it also leaves the pair alone with the all-hearing gods. That the dismissed onlookers must purify themselves from the perceived anger of the goddess is ironic in view of Hero’s own behaviour.

Word of the incident comes right away to Olympus, spread by *Fama*, so that Venus — *die Paphische Monarchin* (52), the queen of Paphos — now appeals to Neptune in his crystal cave. Neptune is himself pining for the love of the nereid Licymnia. Venus complains of how Hero, her own consecrated priestess “sinkt meineydig in die Umarmung eines verwegenen Jünglings” (54, breaks her oath and falls into the embrace of a dissolute youth), and determines that both must die. She calls upon Neptune to raise a storm, and promises him Licymnia as a reward.

As Leander leaves his parental home, the household gods fall and shatter, but although initially concerned, thoughts of Hero drive him on as he imagines himself being received by her and being dried from the sea-water. This echo of Ovid is the closest we get to the consummation scene in a version where Leander drowns on this first swim across the Hellespont, a major deviation from the basic narrative. Even before he starts his thoughts are interrupted by a picture of an open grave shown to him by the Fates, and despite his prayers as he dives into the sea, a storm arises (which is described in detail). He is

unable to see Hero's light, and although he pleads with the gods of the sea, *die unerbittliche Parce* (62, inescapable Fate) comes down in a thunder-cloud and cuts the thread of his life as he stammers out the name "He---ro". The waves cast his body onto Hero's shore, where she is waiting and praying; the slave-girl finds the body and Hero realises that he is dead. She is compared to Niobe, but unlike Niobe, who was turned to stone, "keine Gottheit kam der ohnmächtigen Hero verwandelnd entgegen" (66, no deity came to offer the fainting Hero any metamorphosis). Venus is still thirsting for her blood, but Hero does not, in fact, weep. *Stumm war ihr Schmerz*, her pain was silent (67). Instead, she condemns the gods:

Nein, es sind keine Götter, ein bloßes Nichts ist eure Macht, der blinde Aberglaube ersann sie. Oder seydt ihr auch keine Geburt der Einbildung, so seydt ihr Tyrannen, nicht Väter, denn sonst hättet ihr mir meinen Geliebten, meinen Leander, nicht geraubt. (68f.)

(No, there are no gods, all your power is a mere nothing, dreamt up by blind superstition. Or if you really are not just the product of imagination, then you are tyrants and not fatherly, because otherwise you would never have stolen from me my love, my Leander.)

She declares that Leander has died for her and so she will die for him and that they will meet in Elysium, beyond the hand of Fate, and hurls herself from the top of her tower. Sestos and Abydos mourn and place them in a single grave. The myrtle planted over it grows into a dark wood, which becomes a place visited by young lovers, who mourn for them. This is not a metamorphosis but simply a place of memory, and only Hero says that they will be reunited.

Mangelsdorf's prose-poem is undeservedly forgotten. His revised Musaios adds enlightenment touches to the classical spirit. Hero's outburst against the gods, questioning their very existence, is impressive at the end of a work in which the uncomprehending lovers follow their human natures quite apart from the gods, who nevertheless control them and who abandon them to fate. The delight, force and danger of love on the physical plane is clear, and the lovers are mourned by other lovers who are not the playthings of the gods. That is their real posterity within the memorial wood. Underneath the narrative there is, once again, Luzán's conflict of cruelty: Amor as natural love, against Venus as the uncompromising and demanding supernatural love. Mangelsdorf's perspective demands a re-thinking of the basic narrative and he has revised the framework, whilst retaining (most of) the elements familiar from antiquity.

21 Alexandre de Querelles, *Héro et Léandre. Poème nouveau en trois chants* (1801)

As a pendant to Mangelsdorf we may glance briefly and out of chronological sequence at the anonymously published *Héro et Léandre*, another prose poem in cantos, supposedly translated into French from a Greek manuscript, but in fact a much expanded (ninety-six pages) and sentimentalised version of (mostly) Musaios. It seems to be by the dramatist and writer (Comte) Alexandre de Querelles (late 18th-mid-19th century?) and it appeared in an elegant edition with a frontispiece and eight coloured plates by P. L. Debucourt, and with classical notes.⁶¹ The title page and brief preface refer to the supposed manuscript source. The first canto has much on the temple and the festival of Venus, Leander is obsessed with the young priestess who is like Venus herself. After the festival there are games, at which Leander wins a race and is crowned by Hero. In the second canto he is back in Abydos and dreams of a torch — *flambeau* — which is “symbole de l’ardeur des amants” (p. 45, symbol of the ardour of lovers), and Hero dreams of Leander. Accordingly he swims the Hellespont — “il s’élance sans crainte sur le plus perfide des éléments” (p. 57, hurls himself fearlessly into the most perfidious of the elements) — declares himself to Hero, and, although she initially tells him to leave, they go to a secret grotto, where she “cede enfin à l’amour” (p. 67, gives way to love). The love-grotto has overtones of the medieval *Tristan*, but they do return to her tower, and then he must swim back. The final section outlines their impatience to be together, even though there will be a storm. He swims, but winds blow out the guiding lamp and he drowns, barely able to voice her name. Hero wanders along the shore next day calling him but finds the unfortunate “victime de la perfide amour” (p. 90 victim of perfidious love) and herself now curses “cruel Amour” (p. 91, cruel Eros). She will — she tells Leander — sacrifice herself: “je m’immole à l’amour ... Ah! j’espère que le fils cruel de Vénus, après tant de rigueur, me permettra du moins de t’approcher dans le séjour des ombres” (p. 93, I shall sacrifice myself to love ... Oh, I hope that the cruel son of Venus after such suffering will at least permit me to come to you in the realm of shadows). She throws herself into the sea, and we are told that, far from the spot being a place of memorial, lovers now avoid that shore, above which only the piercing and sinister sound of *la chouette solitaire*, the lonely owl, can be heard.

61 *Héro et Léandre. Poème nouveau en trois chants* (Paris: Pierre Didot l’aîné, 1801). The text is available on the Gallica website, and there is a modern facsimile reprint (Paris: Hachette, 2016). Alexandre de Querelles seems to have used the name L.-G. Magnant as well.

Published at the very start of the nineteenth century, this version ought ideally to be treated as a literary object, a finely-produced book with appropriate illustrations and modest classical notes, presenting the story in a sentimental manner, but not entirely so, since the pair do both die, as they must, and there is no guarantee of union in the afterlife, or rather, in the realm of shadows. Despite the spurious source, the classical feeling is mostly maintained, with echoes of Ovid and Musaios, but the longing, the sighs, and the gradual movement towards their love, gives the first two sections, at least, the air of a nov-elette. Venus sounds almost like the Christian god when she is asked “Vénus, ô Vénus, console celui qui soupire” (p. 29, Venus, oh Venus, bring comfort to those who sigh), and it is her son who is cruel. The plaintive and sinister cries of the solitary owl provide a fitting ending, now that posthumous reunion is at best hoped for, and fortunate metamorphosis is no longer a possibility.

22 **Octavien d'Alvimar, *Héro et Léandre: Épopée érotique en quatre chants* (Late 18th Century?)**

Gaëtan-Octavien Souchet d'Alvimar (Dalvimar, Dalvimart), born in 1770 and styled both *Comte* and *Général*, is an enigmatic figure, a soldier, painter and writer, as well as a possible envoy in Mexico for Napoleon. His “erotic epic” of Hero and Leander in rhymed couplets takes up four cantos and occupies more than a hundred pages,⁶² around three and a half thousand lines, and is included here *faute de mieux* because it is for the most part resolutely, indeed relentlessly classical, and shares several features with earlier versions. It is not known precisely when it was written (though d'Alvimar seems to have been in Greece early in his career).⁶³ It is unclear when he died. It is not easy to categorize this otherwise virtually unknown work, which does not really invite detailed research. It is overly long and seems intent to get in as many classical place and personal names as possible (a passage on the nereids names around a dozen of

62 Général d'Alvimar, *Parties des Travaux Littéraires* (Paris: Thunot, 1852), II, 179–308. The work — online in Gallica — is itself divided into two parts, so that the page-numbers are those of the second part of the volume, which claims to contain most (!) of his poetry: “presque toutes ses œuvres poetiques”.

63 See *L'Esprit des Journaux Français et Etrangers*, vol. VII, third term (Brussels: Weissenbruch, 1805), p. 85f., which footnotes him in a review of a book about travels in Greece (then under Turkish rule). There is also material about his early life and career in a footnote towards the end of the Hero and Leander poem, p. 283f., à propos of a digression about France. It claims that he acquired a taste for the arts — pictorial and literary — when living in Germany, near Dusseldorf, having been dismissed from the army and having fled the revolution in France. He later returned to France and rejoined the army.

them, although there are, to be fair, apparently over seventy names recorded of the *filles de Doris* and Nereus) and to elaborate as much as possible on the architecture and decoration of the temple. Throughout the narrative there are additional stories and histories (Pyramus, Orpheus, Phrixos and Helle, Sappho and Phaon, Xerxes and the Bosphorus), which sometimes prompt the writer to apologise for his *vagabonde imagination* (p. 232), roving imagination, before returning eventually to the matter in hand.

The beauty of Hero is described at length, and Leander is duly smitten. Again comparing Hero's beauty to that of Venus herself angers the goddess, who this time calls precisely upon her son, Cupid, to help her in taking her revenge. Cupid agrees, reluctantly tearing himself away from his lover, Psyche; but he is also much attracted by Hero's beauty, and wounds her — causing her to love Leander. Luzán's question about which god is the more cruel is almost quoted:

Ah! dans les maux tant incompréhensibles
Que Cupidon et Vénus font tous deux,
Qui me dira le plus capricieux ... (p. 200)

(Ah! In the incomprehensible misfortunes that Cupid and Venus bring about, who can tell me which is the most capricious?)

Answering, or rather, failing to answer his own question, the writer tells us that the mother is indeed vindictive, but the son — later described as *ce petit monstre*, p. 201, this little monster — can often be cruel as well, and he is not going to decide. The *flamme cruel* (p. 208, cruel flame) has been ignited, and the two are plunged into the torments of love. He will swim to her from Abydos and she will set up a torch, *un fanal*, on the tower.

The second canto has them both waiting for the day to end, and for many pages Leander “s’abandonnait à sa douleur extrême”, gives himself up his extreme sorrow, while Hero is similarly “livrée à ses seules douleurs”, delivered up to her lonely sorrows (pp. 223–5). She dreams, drops flowers, until (after a series of authorial digressions), night falls at last and Leander, with the help of the gods, crosses the Hellespont. The love scene, which occupies the third canto, is suitably graphic, as befits a work advertised as erotic, with much dwelling on the “divine contours” of Hero's naked breasts, for example (p. 260), until it is time for Leander to go back.

The final canto takes us back to Venus and her revenge, for which Cupid has not, it seems, been much help after all, even if he is a cruel monster. Venus is still angry at Leander's words and is now also jealous of Hero's happiness:

“Elle enviât d’Héro le doux bonheur” (p. 284). The gods are worried here, too, about their position in the scheme of things. Venus again seeks out Neptune (although here it provides an occasion for a geographical excursus) to ask for assistance. A mortal, she explains, has dared to be dismissive of her charms, and the precedent must not be established:

Si les mortels, sans moi, bravent les flots,
 Qui des plaisirs me croira la Déesse?
 Venge-moi donc! (p. 290)

(If mortals are going to brave the floods without me, who is ever going to believe me to be the goddess of pleasures? Avenge me!)

Neptune agrees, and Leander is overtaken by the storm, declaring with Martial: “Accorde-moi Sestos en son visage;/ Tu me noieras, si tu veux, au retour” (p. 297, allow me Sestos and its shore/ you may drown me if you wish on my return). But it is, as so often, voiced in vain, and he drowns, calling Hero’s name. She then sacrifices herself to Venus. The catastrophe is briefly done, and at the end the poet talks simply about visiting Greece. We are beyond speculations about any afterlife and there is certainly no metamorphosis.

This work echoes the far briefer and far more effective poem of Luzán, and to an extent also Mangelsdorf’s prose-poem. The reader is distracted by the plethora of learned references and by the participation of the author-voice in the narrative, all too frequently prefaced by *Hélas!* In terms of narrative, however, the conflict is once again the unequal one between the lovers and the gods, the cruelty of the latter deriving from what they see as hubris on the part of the mortals, who now do not take them seriously enough. Venus’s pique and the argument she uses to enlist Neptune’s aid, that this could be a precedent and that humans might stop believing in the gods altogether, makes it sound like a final rally from Olympus before the inevitability of the Enlightenment.

23 Manuel Maria Barbosa Bocage, ‘A morte de Leandro e Hero’ (1798–1805)

Roughly contemporary with d’Alvimar’s work and equally difficult to classify, finally, is what is effectively an extended epitaph in more than 200 rhymed lines. It is designated a cantata, though there seems to be no known musical connection. The Portuguese poet Manuel Maria Barbosa Bocage (1765–1805) from Setúbal composed a number of these ‘cantatas’ on classical themes,

including in the last part of his life (after 1798) one entitled 'A morte de Leandro e Hero', on the death of Leander and Hero. It ends with a pair of quatrains placed on their tomb, saying that the lovers were forced by fate to a sad ending, and concluding that "Mortaes amêmos,/ Mas não assim" (p. 333, mortals may love, but not like these). The writing is again rather exclamatory, beginning with Leander's final journey — "Ah Leandro infeliz! Tu já fraquêas ..." (Ah, unhappy Leander, you are weakening ...), and the beloved flame, the kindly star which leads him is fading (p. 328). Hero invokes love, the gods and fate, but both fall to cruel destiny (*Ah triste!*, p. 331), and at the end dolphins and nereids lament the tragedy.⁶⁴

24 Summary

A period from the renaissance down to the very end of the eighteenth century naturally implies a wide range of different approaches to the story. The numerous translations of Ovid and of Musaios all through this broad period reinforce awareness of the extent to which interest in the narrative is maintained. The English works stand out in the earlier stages and demonstrate various interpretative possibilities. Marlowe's difference is its eroticism, more so than in almost any other version, developing one aspect of Ovid while using the structure of Musaios and adding a great deal of additional material. His continuator Chapman turns to the tragic outcome, while Petowe moves away from it entirely, avoiding the tragic death altogether.

Hans Sachs offers a quite explicit moral, even if there is a whiff of afterthought about it, but his warning against the dangers implicit in love looks like the last flicker of the middle ages. There is nothing of that in the early Spanish romances, which seem to enjoy the tragic tale for its own sake and hence as an acceptance of constancy in love. With later writers, the justification for telling the tale can be implicit, as in Boscán's underlining of the natural law of marriage; Chapman bewails the absence of Ceremony and the (in the literal sense) illicit nature of the love celebrated so vigorously by his predecessor, Marlowe. Even Petowe's avoidance of the tragedy altogether is a kind of strategy for coping with the problems of the known tale. Even more negative than Chapman, who warns against unbridled love, Barth returns to a more strongly expressed explicit view that love is dangerous, especially (as far as Barth is concerned) for young men. Of the less well-known works, the version by von Hohberg has its

64 Manuel Bocage, *Obras Poeticas de Bocage* (Porto: Imprensa Portuguesa, 1875–6), II, 326–33.

flaws, but it does celebrate the virtue of constancy. Overall, however, the two possibilities that were always there are maintained: that this is an uplifting love story of unity in death; or a warning that love (or an excess of it) can lead to death, it is a golden bubble that causes problems when it bursts.

The role of the gods (including a few new ones) and especially of the Fates is varied but important, particularly in those versions where the conflict between gods and humans is made explicit, although it is sometimes striking that the gods seem to be fading away, aware of their tenuous position as the Enlightenment takes hold. Some extra cast-members appear (such as Leander's sister), though none with great significance to the plot. As far as details are concerned, it is not always made clear when or if the relationship between the lovers is consummated, nor does Leander necessarily swim the Hellespont on a regular basis. The role of the lamp — usually extinguished by the wind, hence by the hand of fate — is, by and large, far less prominent than in the classical works. In Mangelsdorf it barely figures at all, although it is retained as part of the original story.

In style the short lines of Sachs and of the early romances differ radically, of course, from the sometimes-convoluted Latin of Barth, but dialogue, rhetoric and (in cases like that of Barth) declamation play a part, and are also discussed, especially in the renaissance. Where, indeed, *does* Marlowe's Leander learn such seductive argumentation? Even in a work as late as Mangelsdorf's prose-poem, Cupid himself instructs Leander in amorous sophistry. Hero's extensive lament at the end of Barth's epic (with an encore in the *Heroes Infelices*) has been criticised, on the other hand, as being in poor taste, meaning that her situation is not one for extended declamation, an objection based on the realism of the story. Mangelsdorf, again, has Hero's actual *grief* specifically silent, although she does rail against the gods.

A recurrent theme is that the story is itself the monument to these lovers, their fame is its own memorial. For Bocángel this is enough, and otherwise there is only the sea and the winds; and Chapman gives them additional honour by claiming this love story as the first ever told. Moving into the eighteenth century, the late romance by Luzán and the prose-poem of Mangelsdorf focus on the conflict between human and natural love, and love in its idealised state. Both Cupid and Venus are cruel, and Hero and Leander are victims of love as a powerful, desired, and destructive force; yet their shared grave can still be a place of pilgrimage if it is not abandoned and lonely, haunted by the plaintive cries of the solitary owl.

Ballads, Folk and Literary

*Habt ihr, jammert eine Mutter,
Hero nicht gesehen?*



The folk-ballads on the theme of Hero and Leander, some of them at least, were written down early in the sixteenth century and their composition is presumably older, while a closely related pop-song can be more precisely dated to the end of the 1950s. The literary ballads also cover a long period from the eighteenth century onwards. Both kinds of ballad present a serious version of the full narrative, even if in the folk-ballads the names and places are not always, or even often those of antiquity. The term ‘ballad’ is a very broad one (its proximity to the Spanish *romancero* has been noted), and some full versions of the story which are not strictly in ballad form may usefully be included here.

1 Folk-Ballads

The precise route taken by a classical story into the folk-ballad is never clear. Edson Richmond has a nice conceit about the way classical figures travel from Greece “by word of mouth, by manuscripts and by cheap broadsides and pamphlets — some of which foundered under them” until they reach (and sometimes dwindle in) the popular ballad.¹ Dating folk-ballads is difficult precisely for those reasons, but the roots usually lie in the fifteenth or sixteenth centuries (and casual reference is even made to ‘medieval ballads’). One possible route is the reduction of the classical story into a folk-tale, which might then pass at some later stage into a ballad, although the interrelationship of ballad

1 W. Edson Richmond, “*Paris og Helen i Trejeborg: A Reduction to Essentials*”, in: *Medieval Literature and Folklore Studies*, ed. Jerome Mandel and Bruce Rosenberg (New Brunswick NJ: Rutgers UP 1970), pp. 229–43 and 369–75, citation from p. 229. See also Walter Morris Hart, “Professor Child and the Ballad”, *PMLA* 21 (1906), 755–807, especially the summary pp. 804–7. Cecil J. Sharp summed up the early ballad as “narrative in substance and lyrical in form” in his *English Folk Song*, 4th rev. ed. by Maud Karpeles (London: Mercury, 1965), p. 109.

and folktale can work in both directions as tales move into and out of orality. The Armenian tale of Akhtamar — discussed below — provides an illustration of the adaptation of the original story into a localised narrative which then becomes the subject of a ballad, in this case a modern one.

Ballads, like folk-tales are usually reductive, taking the essentials of the story (whether it was received by oral or literary means) and focusing upon the basic structure, conforming it at the same time to a set of stylistic features such as simple and direct story-telling without reflection or emotion, straightforward language with much direct dialogue, incremental repetition, formulas, and refrains. The tales of Hero and Leander, Orpheus and Eurydice and Pyramus and Thisbe are all amongst the classical themes adopted, and that of Hero and Leander tends to be presented entirely on a human level. Although the tragedy may derive from the power of the storm or from the malice of someone extinguishing the guiding flame, the gods do not play a part. We do have printed ballads from the sixteenth century, but much of the evidence is from the seventeenth and later. Equally significantly, however, many of them remain in the folksong repertoire, and recordings are available of relevant French, German and Scots ballads

Although the names and locations may be ignored or changed while the structure of the story is retained, sometimes the classical names *are* kept, even though the geography may become a little confused, especially in (usually) later versions which overlap with the literary ballad, so that the ‘Sonnet’ of Humphrey Crouch (and indeed the English ‘Tragedy of Hero and Leander’) might be considered under either head. They display more detailed knowledge of the classical material, but they conform otherwise to the stylistic pattern of those ballads where the classical names are *not* retained. Moreover, we do have tunes for them. The folk-ballad is essentially (though not always) a sung form.

The narrative is widely reflected in various oral cultures in Europe, and a French tradition, ‘Le Flambeau d’Amour’ even extends to the New World in Francophone Canada. In continental Northern Europe (covering largely Germany, the Netherlands, Denmark and Sweden and beyond) the so-called *Königskinder* ballads predominate, the ballads of the two royal children. A separate group of Scots ballads includes ‘Clyde Water’ and ‘Rare Willie Drowned in Yarrow’, while in English there is an anonymous broadside, plus another composed by Humphrey Crouch. The melodies were sometimes traditional, and the printed broadsides were often set to known tunes. A final stage is represented by an American pop-song, which has its own composed lyric and melody.

It can be difficult to determine which ballads genuinely (still) reflect the theme. Ballads of the order of ‘The Water is Wide’ and others (such as ‘The

Water of Tyne') are simply about divided lovers and the inability to find a boat; the ballad 'The Swimming Lady' of around 1684 does involve two lovers in water but is emphatically not tragic. Plenty of ballads have lovers who die together — "Sweet William died of love for me/ And I shall die tomorrow" — but Barbara Allen is quite unrelated to Hero. Even in a modern and literary context, Algernon Charles Swinburne's ballad-imitation 'The Bride's Tragedy' of 1889 has elements that echo the Scots ballads, and it derives apparently from a popular ballad called 'The Mother's Malison', but it is not about Hero and Leander.²

2 The *Königskinder* and *Elslein* Ballads

The much-studied ballad of the two royal children is attested most notably in a variety of forms in High and Low German, with congeners in a great many other languages, including not only Swedish and Danish, but also more remote versions in Czech, Estonian, Finnish, Hungarian, Polish, and doubtless others. The Hungarian parallels (from Transylvania) add interesting minor motifs, and in one version the water is the Danube and the Hero-figure is called Julia, but she is still a princess. In High and Low German and Dutch, where the origins seem to lie, there are distinctive groupings of varying length, as is normal in the folk-ballad tradition. They are usually distinguished by title ('Die Königskinder', 'Der verlorene Schwimmer', 'Zwei Wässer', 'Abendgang') or by the opening line ("Es waren zwei [Edel-]Königs-Kinder," "Et wassen twee Künigeskinner," "Zwischen zweien Bürgen," "O Mutter, livste Mutter," "Ach Elslein, liebstes Elslein") and more.³ There are early texts in German and Scandinavian collections, and one

2 *The Bagford Ballads*, ed. Joseph Woodfall Ebsworth (Hertford: Ballad Society, 1878), pp. 133–45; on 'The Water of Tyne' see Gillian Rodger, "Hero and Leander in Scottish Balladry", *Comparative Literature* 9 (1957), 1–16, on p. 13. For Swinburne, see Anne Henry Ehrenpreis, *The Literary Ballad* (London: Arnold, 1966), pp. 175–9 (with a good introduction to the literary ballad).

3 Titles are translated in the discussion of individual texts. They were collected in 1806–8 in the folksong anthology by L. Achim von Arnim and Clemens Brentano, *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*, ed. Anton Birlinger and Wilhelm Creclius (Wiesbaden: Killinger, 1874), pp. 329–37 (with a modern edition, Munich: Winckler, 1957). John Meier, *Das deutsche Volkslied. Balladen* (Leipzig: Reclam, 1936), II, 47–64 has a good collection of examples. References are to the various versions given in these collections. Gray, *Sir Halewyn*, p. 62 translates a three-strophe version of 'Elslein' into Scots. It would be difficult to investigate parallels in all the languages in which they have been recorded, but Heiske, "Königskinder und Elsleinstrophe", cites, pp. 52–3, two Danish versions ('Der var tu aedle Konge-Börn'), and there are Swedish texts in Erik Gustav Geijer and Arvid August Afzelius, *Svenska Folk-Visor från Forntiden* (Stockholm: Strinnholm and Häggström, 1814), I, 103–6, II, 210–12 ("Konungsbarnen"). There are some differences, but the basic text and the dialogues with the mother and the

from a Dutch song-book is dated to sometime after 1525. Various melodies are recorded or noted in ballad collections as having been used in different parts of Germany and the Netherlands.⁴ The relationship of the Elslein-ballads, which seem to be a separate offshoot, is problematic, and indeed whether that subgroup does indeed derive from the Hero and Leander narrative has been called into question. Although it drifts away from it in some versions, it still seems obvious that it does belong to the tradition.

The version beginning “Es waren zwei Königskinder” (there once were two royal children) or a Low German equivalent, describes in the first quatrain how they are in love but cannot come together because the water is too deep (in some versions too wide). The girl suggests that the boy should swim, and she will provide three (or two) candles to light the way. In the third quatrain, a ‘false nun’, who had been pretending to be asleep, or had simply overheard

fisherman are present. They are still sung: a text with a nineteenth-century tune is given in a student songbook, *Liederkorb* (Cologne: Bund, 1983), p. 54, in which the notes refer to versions in Scandinavia, Poland and France, and a version from Moravia in which the young man drowns in a forest stream. On the further examples, see Walter Anderson, *Das Lied von den zwei Königskindern in der estnischen Volksüberlieferung* (Dorpat: Mattiesen, 1931); Martti Haavio, “Man as the Infringer on God’s Domain”, in his *Essais folkloriques* (Helsinki: Société de littérature Finnoise, 1959); Karel Horálek, “Hero a Leander o slovanské lidové poezii”, *Český lid* 50 (1963), 175–8 and Jaromír Jech, “Prozaické zpracování látky Hero a Leander”, *ibid.*, 178–80 (on Kashubian and Polish folktales); Ninon A. M. Leader, *Hungarian Classical Ballads and their Folklore* (Cambridge: CUP, 1967), pp. 98–105 (with a translated text and extensive background).

- 4 See Francis B. Gummere, *The Popular Ballad* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1907), pp. 86–94. The fullest study of the tradition and origins is by Hilde Kommerell, *Das Volkslied “Es waren zwei Königskinder”* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1931), with material also on the Hero and Leander narratives in Middle High German and by Dirk Potter. She is concerned with establishing an archetype and gives examples in Scandinavian languages as well. Reviews of this study added material, by Wilhelm Heiske, *Deutsche Literaturzeitung* 53 (1932), 1598–1600 and by H. Schewe, *Anzeiger für deutsches Altertum* 51 (1932), 226–9. Heiske’s own equally important “Königskinder und Elseinstrophe” was already in print when Kommerell’s book appeared; his views on sources differ from Kommerell’s. There was an earlier study by Ernst Rosenmüller, *Das Volkslied “Es waren zwei Königskinder”. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte des Volkslieds überhaupt* (Leipzig: dissertation, 1917), reviewed in detail by Paul Beyer in *Euphorion* 24 (1922), 200–207. Rosenmüller took the view that the theme was independent and local. See also Julius Sahr, *Die Schwimmersage* (Leipzig: Wissenschaftliche Beilage der Leipziger Zeitung, 1907) and Heinrich Dittmaier, “Der Widersacher in der Königskinderballade”, *Mitteilungen der Rheinischen Vereinigung für Volkskunde* 8 (1949), 5–9. The ballad has always attracted attention; see the website: liederlexikon.de/lieder for a series of relevant entries by Eckhard John. In addition to an entry under the *Königskinder* title, there is one describing a series of parodies, as ‘Es waren zwei Nachbarskinder’, (‘neighbour’s children’) which goes back to Julius Wolff (1834–1910), with later dialect versions; there are also imitations of the form, as ‘Es waren zwei Waisenkinder’ (‘orphan children’).

the arrangement from her chamber, extinguishes the light, and the young man (*Jüngling*; in Low German he is the woman's *lef herte*, dear heart) drowns. The basic narrative is covered, then, in three brief stanzas. The initial situation is not explained, how they communicate is unclear, and the water is the main obstacle. Less commonly, parental — specifically paternal — enmity is explicit: in a late text from Silesia there is *immer noch Zank und Streit* (always quarrels and confrontation) between the two fathers, although this is relatively unusual, and in many other variants in German and elsewhere the mother is concerned for the honour of her daughter. That they are royal children does suggest, of course, political conflict or the need for an approved liaison, and the idea of suitability, hinted at in Ovid, may be an early part of the narrative.⁵ The malicious act perpetrated by a *loses Nönnchen, falske nunne*, dissolute, false nun, is a different development. It is unclear why it should be a nun, unless this echoes Hero's religious situation in other versions. Her role overlaps with that of Hero's mother in some ballads, and she is not close to Hero's usually loyal nurse.

An extended form of this type of ballad goes on to present the reaction of the princess herself in formulaic dialogue with her mother when she wishes to go down to the shore (the nature of the water is flexible). In these versions the focus is upon the Hero-figure, in contrast with, say, the Scots ballads, most of which focus upon the fate of the Leander-equivalent. The dialogue is first between the daughter and the mother ("Ach Mutter, herzlichste Mutter" ... "Ach Tochter, herzlichste Tochter", oh mother dearest mother/ Oh daughter dearest daughter), the former asking if she may walk by the sea. The mother tries to prevent her or suggests that she take her sister or brother with her, but the daughter resists and when the mother goes to sleep, she walks by the sea until she finds a fisherman, whose net brings in the body of the young man. She kisses his corpse and then bids farewell to her parents: "Ade, mein Vater und Mutter! Wir sehn uns nimmermehr" (farewell, father and mother/ we shall never meet again). Some additional motifs crop up, such as the ring on the dead man's hand, but the main element is the finding of the body, delayed by the dialogue with the mother. In the full version the audience is already aware, of course, of what she will find, but a further variant, beginning "O Mutter, liebste Mutter" (o mother, dearest mother) consists of the second part only, the

5 Kommerell, *Volkslied*, p. 13f. cites a Silesian version with this notion. Montiglio, *Hero and Leander*, p. 22 uses this in support of the idea that paternal conflict is a very early component of the story, which may well be the case. She notes that the motif is present also in French and Canadian oral texts.

opening of which simply presents the female speaker as heart-sick. The mother plays a sympathetic part in the related Hungarian ballad.

The version beginning “Zwischen zweien Bürgen” (between two castles) sets up the situation with the young man in one and the young woman in the other, both noble.⁶ Interestingly, he writes to her that he could swim across, and that she should set up a light, and she writes back in agreement, so that there is still a clear echo of the *Heroides*. She sets the light carefully so that the wind does not put it out, but this time the false nun is simply *ein wunderböses Weib*, a most malicious woman. She seems to be the Hero-figure’s mother, since she expresses concern that *unser Tochter*, our daughter, is not well enough protected.⁷ She removes the light, and the noble knight (*Ritter*) drowns. The “Ach Mutter” section then follows, and this time there is formulaic dialogue also with the father and with the fisherman, with the young woman drowning herself at the end.

The versions known as ‘Zwei Wasser’ (two waters) or also ‘Der verlorene Schwimmer’ (the lost swimmer) focus upon the Leander-equivalent. There are some distinct variations here, too, which illustrate how difficult it is to pin down the ballad as text. In some versions a *schöner Jüngling*, a handsome young man declares simply that two bodies of water lie between him and his love (who is sometimes called Elslein), and this causes him great pain, although he hopes to reach her. In the possibly composite ballad printed under the ‘lost swimmer’ title in the *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* collection, however, the narrative, if still somewhat confused, at least explains the doubling of the waters as his tears and the lake. The (unnamed) young woman now sends a light across to him on a little raft (*auf leichtes Holz*). He picks it up and sets out to swim, holding the light in his hand. Then we hear, however, that the light is no longer visible, and the ending asks a question of its own: where can he be, with her or in a watery grave?

6 It is difficult to draw up absolute categories. One of the earliest known versions of the *Königskinder* ballads, the Low German text dated after 1525, begins in this manner, but continues according to the pattern of those beginning “Es waren ...”. A melody is prescribed for it; see Robert Priebsch, *Deutsche Handschriften in England* (Erlangen: Junge, 1896–1901), 1, 230–5. The text is in Meier, *Balladen*, p. 50. See Murdoch, “Bearbeitungen”, p. 245f., and Otto Holzapfel, “Die Königskinder” (‘The Royal Children’). Traditional Folk Balladry on a German Broadside (1563), in: *The Ballad as Narrative*, ed. Flemming G. Andersen (Odense: Odense University Press, 1982), pp. 125–35.

7 Beyer’s review of Rosenmüller, p. 205, asserts that this figure was originally a chambermaid, and links her with the “false nun”. In the surviving version it does sound as if the mother has the role, however, even if only by conflation. A father is also implied. See Montiglio, *Hero and Leander*, p. 22.

The so-called *Elslein*-ballads are further from the familiar narrative. In their most basic form they are simple laments addressed to Elslein (Elsie) that the speaker cannot be with her because two waters lie between them. In the more extended versions the speaker goes on to claim that he cannot row alone, and she agrees to join him. We are now closer to the English ballad 'The Water is Wide' ("And both shall row/ My love and I"), which is part of the general sorrows-of-love complex, rather than an aspect of the Hero and Leander story. The motif of separation is there, but otherwise this group retains very little of the original tale.

3 The French Ballads: 'Le Flambeau d'Amour'

A series of ballads known in oral tradition in France, Switzerland, and, interestingly in Canada and Louisiana, preserves the narrative in a distinctive fashion.⁸ As with other sequences in the oral tradition, titles vary; beside the most usual 'Le Flambeau d'Amour,' the torch of love, variants include 'L'Amant noyé,' 'Galant noyé,' 'La Belle dans la tour,' 'La Fille prisonnière,' 'Les Deux amants' (the drowned lover or suitor, the beauty in the tower, the imprisoned daughter, the two lovers). However, all reflect the basic narrative. The classical names and locations are missing (in one version the boy is called Alexander), but Martial's epigram survives. The girl is fifteen years old and is kept imprisoned in a tower (or a court — *tour/cour*) by her father, who is therefore presumably noble or powerful, to separate her from her lover. The guiding torch of love is extinguished in the storm, and the lovers perish. Bárbara Fernández Taviel de Andrade, who has analysed these texts in detail and who links the tradition with a seventeenth-century song based on Ovid,⁹ prints a late nineteenth-century French version beside one collected in Canada in 1940, the latter containing the plea:

8 Bárbara Fernández Taviel de Andrade, "'Le Flambeau d'Amour' au Canada: conservation et innovation", *Rabaska* 2 (2004), 31–50 (online) has texts and a detailed analysis on p. 39. See also her "Avantage ou d'avantage? Un problème linguistique, sémantique et géographique. À propos de Héro et Léandre et le flambeau d'amour dans la tradition orale française", in: *Charisterion, Francisco Martín García oblatum* (Cuenca: Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha, 2004), pp. 561–71, and indeed her extensive 1989 dissertation, *El mito de Hero y Leandro en la tradición oral europea* (Madrid: Universidad Complutense, 1990, also in French). The song is sung by the French-Canadian folk-group Garolou on their *Mémoire-Vivre* album (Francor, 1999), and by the group Arbadétorne from the Vendée, as well as others.

9 She cites the text from the *Trésor des plus belles chansons ...* collected by the Sieur de Saint-Amour (Troyes: Jacques Oudot, 1699). It refers to the *Metamorphoses* rather than to the *Heroides*, however.

Oh! laissez-moi donc vivre un jour
 Vous me rependrez à mon retour.

“Let me live just one day, and you may take me on my return,” Martial in a slightly amended form. It is noteworthy that the oral material has preserved much of the classical narrative, with a titular focus on the guiding torch, perhaps more so than the *Königskinder* or the Scots ballads. Different variants allow the voices of the girl and the boy to be heard, usually within an objective narrative context which establishes the role of the father. The explanatory paternal determination to preserve his daughter is typical of these ballads, and it is of interest that she is given an age, if not a name. Elsewhere the mother seems most intent on keeping her daughter from an inappropriate love, but parental disapproval in general is common, and even the drastic motif of the actual imprisonment of Hero (by her parents or by an outsider) is found elsewhere.

4 The Scots Ballads: ‘Clyde Water,’ ‘Annan Water,’ ‘Rare Willie Drowned in Yarrow’ (‘The Water o’Gamrie’)

There is a group of related Scots ballads with the basic formula of the male protagonist having to cross a body of water to reach his love, drowning in the attempt, and being followed into death by the female. Not all the ballads have all the elements, the classical names have been localised, and the versions differ in emphasis. ‘Rare Willie’ has been noted as being predominantly emotional and lyrical, where the others (including the ‘Water o’Gamrie’ variations of ‘Rare Willie’) are more clearly narrative.¹⁰ In contrast with the *Königskinder* ballads

¹⁰ The ballads concerned are in *The Oxford Book of Ballads*, ed. Arthur Quiller-Couch (Oxford: Clarendon, 1910), p. 404 (‘Clyde Water’), p. 413 (‘Annan Water’) and p. 416 (‘Rare Willie Drowned in Yarrow’). ‘The Water o’Gamrie’ is usually deemed to be a variation of the last-named. All four (the last with eight variants) are in Francis J. Child, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads* (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1882–98), nos. 215–6. There are many further variations in different folk-song collections. See T. F. Henderson, *The Ballad in Literature* (Cambridge: CUP, 1912), p. 45f., noting that broadsides date from the late seventeenth century. Rodger, “Scottish Balladry” notes, p. 12 the connections with the *Königskinder* ballads, and makes the distinction between ‘Rare Willie’ (as lyrical and emotional) and the more active versions. The Yarrow is a small river (a tributary of the Ettrick) in the Scots borders, and figures in other unconnected ballads, just as the pairing of Willie/William and Margaret recurs often. There are other rivers with the same name, which coincidentally may derive from a Celtic word meaning ‘rough’. Sharp, *English Folk Song*, pp. 110–13 draws attention to the close links between the (Lowland) Scots and English ballads, and indeed to the communality of very similar

(notably in the “Ach Mutter ...” variations), where the girl’s mother dissuades her daughter from seeking the drowned lover, the focus here is usually upon the young man, and this time *his* mother tries to stop him from swimming. In one version, however, the girl’s mother does behave like the wicked woman (*wunderböses Weib*) of the “Zwischen zweien Bürgen” variation, although as with the German ballad, a certain amount of interpretation is required to identify her.

At first glance these ballads might look as if they are not connected very closely with Hero and Leander at all. Thus in ‘Clyde Water’ the initial focus is upon young Willie’s mother, who warns him, at the peril of receiving her *malison*, her curse, against crossing the cold Clyde to reach his Margaret. Furthermore, he tries to ride to his love (or perhaps to swim his horse over the river). On arrival he is apparently repulsed by Margaret, who declares herself afraid that her mother will wake (a fear regularly voiced by young ladies in unrelated ballads). We may assume, however, that here it is really Margaret’s mother who sends Willie away. He returns, disappointed and still aware of his own mother’s curse, is swept from his horse and dies. When Margaret herself awakes and discovers this, she follows him into the river and drowns. There is, however, a sudden and very clear link with the tradition early on in the ballad, with the young man’s words:

O spare, O spare me Clyde’s water!
 Your stream rins wondrous strang:
 Mak’ me your wrack as I come back,
 But spare me as I gang!

The address to the river is again patently that of Martial’s Leander to the waves, as it was in the French ballad, although the specific idea of the wreck also echoes Ovid, *Leander Heroni* 120, “cum redeo, videor naufragus esse mihi” (on the return I see myself as a shipwreck).¹¹ The lines are used again in the Roxburghe ballad of Hero and Leander. The boy’s mother is clearly being defied, even though we are not sure what her objections were. The pretended response of Margaret via *her* mother is close to the more direct sabotage of the *wunderböses Weib*, who in one version was intent on protecting her daughter.

ballad materials in folksongs across Europe, something which the *Königskinder* sequence makes clear.

11 Rodger, “Scottish Balladry”, p. 13 notes the link with Martial, and refers also to the use of the line in the broadside ballad in the Roxburghe collection.

At the end of 'Clyde Water', when Margaret drowns herself by walking into the deep river, the pair are at last joined, albeit in this case as sister and brother, since the sexual aspect is lost. There is no lamp-motif, but the human deceit which forces the boy's return replaces the extinguishing of the light. It is rare that the Leander-figure dies swimming back, however, and the allusion to Martial is doubly ironic, since while it has indeed been granted, he was returning disappointed.

'Clyde Water' is long and detailed, with repetitions and dialogue, and 'Annan Water' is essentially a variation of it. The unnamed speaker declares that he will cross Annan Water to get to his love (Annie this time), but his horse is wearied by the ride and refuses to go on for fear of the water (embodied in terms of local myth as one of the fearsome water-horses, a "water-kelpy roaring" rather than Neptune and Triton, for example), and the boatman refuses, too. The speaker then takes off his coat (a distant echo of Leander stripping) and although he swims strongly, he drowns. The last two quatrains are in the voice of Annie herself, who lost her true love when his limbs tired. And yet her curse on the water offers a splendidly practical answer instead of a suicide; the concept is almost burlesque, but the praise of true love is still serious:

And wae betide ye, Annan Water
 This night that ye are a drumlie river!
 For over thee I'll build a bridge,
 That ye never more true love sever.

'Rare Willie' is rather different, and closer to 'Elslein'. It is brief and does not contain the motif of crossing the river, concentrating instead on the woman's love for Willie, and then the emotions of her loss, as she tries to find him. In the longer 'Water o'Gamrie' versions she dies with him. The first part of the Hero and Leander narrative is not present, and the starting-point is Hero looking out for her dead lover. The shortest form of the song ends with "She found him drown'd in Yarrow;" in longer versions she pulls him from the water, and in one of the 'Water o'Gamrie' variants kisses him and dies with him: "But now since Willie died for me, I will sleep wi' him in the same grave at Gamrie". In these versions, too, Willie's mother, as in the 'Clyde Water' ballad, tries to stop the relationship. The would-be prevention of the relationship by forbidding the lover to cross the water, the drowning of the swimming lover, and the finding of his body (and sometimes subsequent suicide) by the woman are all key themes.

5 **The English Broadside: ‘The Tragedy of Hero and Leander, or: The Two Unfortunate Lovers’ (ca 1649); Humphrey Crouch, ‘An Excellent Sonnet of the Unfortunate Love of Hero and Leander’ (ca 1640?)**

Two English broadside ballads¹² restore the names of the main characters. The first is dated to around 1649 and was printed for R. Burton, in blackletter with three woodcuts; it was included in the collection known as the Roxburghe ballads, and (modernised, abridged and laid out somewhat differently) in Allan Ramsay’s *Tea-Table Miscellany* in the eighteenth century.¹³ As the title and the use of the names indicate, we are approaching the literary ballad, but it is entirely narrative, beginning (without prior explanation) with Leander leaping “all naked” into the stormy Hellespont. Leander voices once more the sentiment seen already: “Make me a wrack/ as I come back,/ but spare me as I go” (12), and asks for help from the gods, but more briefly than in the classical versions. However, “The Gods were mute/ unto his sute,/ the billows answer “no!” (15) This is a direct echo of Marlowe’s second sestiad, verse 152 “But still the rising billows answered ‘No’”, indicating a cumulative literary tradition that is both classical and English.

Hero, who has set up “a feeble light” (19) to guide him, begs the dolphins to help as well. The language throughout is light, with playful rhymes (“O Heavens! (quoth she)/ against poor me,/ do you your forces bend?” 39). However, despite her attempts to preserve the light, Hero is “undone/ Not by Leander’s fault, but Fate.” Determined that he should not die alone, she hurls herself into the sea, kisses his dying lips and they die together, resigned to “the will of Fate”. The formalised ending of the ballad (which Ramsay omitted) contains, nevertheless, the injunction that lovers should be as true to each other as these: “Let lovers all example take,/ and evermore prove true/ For *Hero and Leander’s* sake,/ who bid you now adieu” (47f.). The first of these lines is typical of the summarising

12 The song ‘Hero and Leander’, one of the miscellany of poems included in: Philomusus [John Gough?], *The Marrow of Complements. Or, A Most Methodicall and accurate forme of Instructions for all Variety of love-letters, Amorous Discourses, and Complementall Entertainements* (London: Moseley, 1655), pp. 169–71 was not available to me; Booth, “Hero’s Afterlife”, p. 6, considers it to derive from a ballad.

13 *The Roxburghe Ballads*, ed. William Chappell (vols. 1–3) and Joseph Woodfall Ebsworth (4–8) (Hertford: Ballad Society, 1869–1901), vol. VI (1888–9), pp. 556–9 (text p. 558f.), cited by line-number. Ramsay printed a rather different form of the ‘Hero and Leander’ ballad in book four of his collection of songs in 1740, *The Tea-Table Miscellany* (Edinburgh: Kincaid, 14th ed., 1768), pp. 319–21. It is the second poem in book four as ‘Hero and Leander’, styled “An old Ballad”, and the request is to “Make me your wreck ...” The ballad is followed by ‘Rare Willy drown’d in Yarrow’ in the short (four-quatrain) form.

message of the folk-ballad which often appears at the start (“Come all ye young maidens/ Take warning from me ...”). The final line, though, is almost theatrical.

Humphrey Crouch, a ballad-writer who seems to have been active in the early to middle part of the seventeenth century, published a broadside, again with some woodcuts, containing his ‘sonnet’, by which is meant simply a song to a given melody, which he names.¹⁴ The text is initially memorable for mixing up the names of the protagonists, with a male Hero doing the swimming. The heading in the Roxburghe collection carries the somewhat alarming corrective: “For Hero read Leander and vice-versa, *passim*”. Like the anonymous broadside, this is formally elaborate in rhyme and rhythm, making up, perhaps, for the lack of classical knowledge. There are comic elements about both ballads, but Crouch inserts some explanatory notes into the narrative, and appends an unusual moral. Once again the role of a parent — a father, rather than a mother — echoes the *malison* which bedevilled poor Willie in the Scots ballads.

The Leander figure is at the outset unable to cross the “pleasant river Hellespont,” partly because no boatman will take him, but also for fear of paternal rage. We are told in an introductory paragraph (where the names are correct) how Hero’s “cruel father confined her in a Tower”. Hero and Leander debate their fate, therefore, on either side of the “river” until he decides:

Now must I make my tender
Slender arms my oars! Help! Wat’ry powers,
Yea, little fishes, teach me how to swim,
And all the sea nimphs ...
I come, Leander ... [in the margin “read: Hero”] (61–9)

However odd the nominal confusion, and however difficult it is to take seriously the tender/slender arms and the request to the fish (given that the original tale is based on Leander’s abilities as a swimmer), there are faint classical echoes nevertheless. The catastrophe, however, is swiftly done:

But oh! a mighty tempest rose, and he was drownd that tide,
In her fair sight, his heart’s delight,
And so with grief she dy’d. (70–2)

14 It follows the anonymous ballad in the Roxburghe collection: *Roxburghe Ballads*, ed. Ebsworth, VI, 559–63 (text from p. 560). The text is online in several forms, including transcripts of the original broadside.

With this, however, we return to the question of the paternal objection to their love. Hero's aged father is now stricken with remorse and assumes the blame, confessing to all who hear the story that both died because of him: "Posterity shall know", he tells us, that "the fault lay all in me" (83f.) Where in earlier texts Hero claims that guilt, here the responsibility is placed firmly on a third party, whose rage precipitated the events. He arranges that they be placed together in "one most stately Tomb" and issues a final warning to fathers not to interfere with loyal and true hearts. Kaspar von Barth may have warned young men explicitly about avoiding the dangers of love, Crouch is equally specific in his warning to parents not to impede it.

6 Hovhannes Tumanyan, 'Akhtamar' (1891)

An interesting demonstration of the range of the narrative, and also of the difficulty of categorizing ballads as such, is found in the fifteen-quatrain 'Akhtamar' by the Armenian poet and writer Hovhannes Tumanyan (1869–1923; his name is transliterated in different ways). The poem (which has been translated into English) is a simple ballad variation on the theme. The beautiful Tamar lights a beacon every night on an island in Lake Van to guide her unnamed lover, who swims bravely to her. Both burn with the fire of love, but nature whispers of her sinful shamelessness. Unspecified villains extinguish the flame, he loses his way and is drowned. In this case, however, his dying utterance of her name, "O, Tamar" gives the name still borne by the island of Akhtamar in Lake Van.

Tumanyan was much interested in folk tales, and his simple but effective ballad is based upon a well-known Armenian folk-version of the narrative of Hero and Leander, in which Tamar is the daughter of King Artashes, and hence a *Königskind* once again, while the lover is a commoner. Significant in the folk-tale is the class distinction as a reason for the secrecy of the love, but Tumanyan's poem focusses on the lost lover and his last words, giving a folk-etymology for the place-name. The location of the work in what is now Turkey, but what was once a major Armenian religious site, may have lent a nationalistic impetus to the survival of the story. While Tumanyan's poem is a modern literary work, the origin of the poem in a folk-tale and the simplicity of its form allow us to place this poem into the category of the folk-ballad, the more so as it has been set to music.¹⁵

15 The poem is available in English on-line at: poemhunter.com/i/ebooks/pdf/hovhannes_toumanian_2012_6_pdf on pp. 3–4. The translator is not given, and we have in this case to rely on the English version. On the poet see Kevork B. Bardakjian, *A Reference Guide to*

7 J. P. Richardson, 'Running Bear' (1958/9)

Part of the sung ballad tradition of Hero and Leander, and not without value in its own right, is the pop-song 'Running Bear', which was written in 1958 (or just possibly 1959). It was a hit-parade success in 1960 and has been recorded or performed many times since then by different singers. The music (simple and melodic) and the equally memorable lyrics were composed by J(iles) P(erry) 'Jape' Richardson (1930–1959), who performed as 'the Big Bopper', and who died in the air accident that also killed Buddy Holly in early February 1959. He had arranged for the song to be recorded by Johnny Preston (1939–2011), and although this was delayed a little by copyright issues following Richardson's death, Preston's Mercury record was at number one for some weeks in 1960. Richardson had felt that the song was not for him, and Preston was himself apparently initially reluctant because of the content, which places the song into the category — of which there were plenty of other examples in and after the 1950s and 60s — of the teenage tragedy, the connection of young love with death. This is often linked with parental opposition, a familiar enough motif. The theme was taken entirely seriously. Since the recording sold a great number of copies, it was, however, presumably received by a wide audience, not all part of the newly affluent teenage primary recipients, and it belongs really to a broad folk tradition. As an aside on cultural continuity, translations included a cover version in German by Gus Backus (*Brauner Bär und Weisse Taube*; for reasons of scansion 'brown bear and white dove'), possibly appealing to a German audience brought up on Karl May and his equally highly romanticised 'Red Indians', or even on the *Königskinder*.

The story retains the constants to a large extent, and it is presented in three effective strophes, with an insistent rhythm and with a repeated and rhythmically slightly different chorus. Running Bear is an "Indian brave" who loves Little White Dove, who lives on the other side of a "raging river", but their respective tribes are at war, which forbids the love. The water is, moreover, as in the traditional ballads, too wide to swim, so that all they can do is look with

Modern Armenian Literature 1500–1920 (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 2000), p. 182. There is a sung version, with music by Adiss Harmandian (b. 1945) which is available on the internet, and another (untranslated) song with the same title by Harout Pamboukjian (b. 1950). On the folk-tale see Anne H. Avakian, *Armenian Folklore Bibliography* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: University of California Press, 1994), s.v. Aghtamar. It is referenced in Suren Oganessian, *Odinochka. Armenian Tales from the Gulag* (St Petersburg, FL: Vishapakar, 2016). The island was an important Armenian religious site from the middle ages until 1915. There is a statue celebrating the legend, albeit on a different lake, Sevan in Armenia.

longing or blow covert kisses to each other in the moonlight. In the last verse Running Bear does dive into the water, she does the same, they kiss and drown, but we are assured that they will be together in “the happy hunting ground”, the equivalent of the Elysian Fields. It is a nice coincidence that Ovid’s Hero herself speculates on swimming to the middle of the Hellespont to meet and kiss Leander there (*Hero Leandro*, 167–80). The story-book or Hollywood image of Native Americans may no longer be entirely acceptable or politically correct, and some of the war cries or chanted rhythmic vocal backing might be felt to be patronising, but the content of the song is not offensive. Its (superficial) context is a world where tribes can be at war with one another, providing the obstacle to the love, but this is the tale of Hero and Leander, transferred from antiquity into a different romanticised other, for empathetic, but not *too* close self-identification by 1960s teenagers. The position of the song within the teenage-tragedy genre makes a significant point about the continued presentation of the narrative at all, a cathartic release from the angst of problematic and parentally disapproved young love by contemplation of a (remote, if not classical) tragedy presented in popular song, the medium most pertinent to the young. Although distanced by the setting, practically all the elements are there: youth, forbidden love, the night, the water, the double drowning, and the unity in death and the afterlife. As in other folksong versions, the regular crossing of the water and the consummation have been lost. The lamp is also missing, but it is not needed in this case since they can see each other in the moonlight; period and genre would preclude any overt sex, however fast her little heart might be beating. The gender-archetypes are also retained: Running Bear is a brave (the word is a substantive), but the adjective ‘little’ is used more than once for his ‘maid’. The re-location is a very American substitute for the much-emphasised classical antiquity. Richardson’s song, structurally within the sung ballad tradition too, has been very widely transmitted through the original and later recordings in different languages, sheet music, and doubtless a continued oral tradition, not only amongst the young. The tale is economically and memorably told, constrained in scope also by the need to fit into the standard time of around three minutes for the recording of a pop single.¹⁶ How many of its audience recognised the parallel with Hero and

16 The Mercury single by Preston (71474X45) lasts just over two and a half minutes, in fact. The sheet music cover was a publicity shot of Preston, with the copyright 1959 listed as Big Bopper Music Company (elsewhere Ivan Mogull Music). The current copyright is Universal-Songs of Polygram International, Chicago. On generic questions regarding folksongs and popular songs — where the borderlines are always indistinct — see the introduction by Frank Howes, *Folk Music of Britain — and Beyond* (London and New York: Routledge, 1969), pp. 1–17 and also pp. 121–49. (on ballads and broadsides).

Leander is a matter of debate (it was occasionally linked, river notwithstanding, with the more familiar Romeo and Juliet), but that this love will never die, even though the main characters do, is repeated in the three choruses.

8 Literary Ballads

The eighteenth and nineteenth centuries exhibited, most notably in Germany, great interest in the collection and study of the folk-ballad. The literary ballad, influenced by this interest, is not a sung form, but it may imitate the simple narrative presentation and features like repetition or dialogue. Equally, it may take the form of a narrative poem of moderate, but not epic, length, telling the still-circumscribed story in a more elevated manner. The term 'philosophical ballad' has been used in the context of Goethe and Schiller in particular.

9 Friedrich Schiller, 'Hero und Leander' (1801)

'Hero und Leander' by the dramatist, poet and historian Schiller (1759–1805) reflects the interest in both the ballad and the theme which he shared with Goethe.¹⁷ However, although Schiller noted in a letter to his friend on June 28, 1801, that he had finished a ballad on Hero und Leander for the publisher Cotta, and Goethe replied on July 12 that he wished Schiller had sent him the text, there is no further discussion, even though Goethe himself considered writing on the topic and it has been suggested that some of his lyrics do refer to the theme.¹⁸ Schiller's ballad, in spite of his high status as a major poet, has

17 The text of Schiller's 'Hero und Leander' is available in all collected editions of Schiller's works (such as the five-volume Hanser-edition, *Sämtliche Werke*, ed. Gerhard Fricke and Herbert Göpfert, Munich: Hanser, 1958–9), in many poetry anthologies and online. References are to the strophe-numbers. There is a nineteenth-century translation of it by Edward Bulwer-Lytton: Lord Lytton, *Schiller and Horace* (London: Routledge, n.d.), pp. 90–98. Lytton (1803–73) first published his Schiller-translations in *Blackwood's Magazine* in the early 1840s, with a book edition of *The Poems and Ballads of Schiller* in 1845 and 1852. Schiller's ballad has been much studied, and Jellinek, *Sage*, devotes a whole section to it, pp. 51–9. Hood is treated rather more briefly.

18 On Goethe's plans, see Georg Schaaffs, *Goethes Hero und Leander und Schillers romantisches Gedicht* (Strasbourg: Trübner, 1912), p. 5, with reference to other correspondents. Schaaffs's unconvincing thesis is that a group of Goethe's lyric poems do reflect the theme, and he compares them in detail with Musaios and Ovid. He has rather less to say about Schiller, in fact. It is again of incidental interest that another great writer, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729–81) was interested in, but clearly had problems with Musaios's

not always received acclaim in literary studies. Bernd von Heiseler expressed the view that “one cannot avoid the conclusion that [‘Hero und Leander’, ‘Der Drachenkampf’ and ‘Der Eisenhammer’] are school-exercises in the application of a preconceived stylistic concept, rather than poems”. Heiseler considered that other narrative poems by Schiller, such as ‘Die Kraniche des Ibykus’ (The Cranes of Ibykus) were more successful, but since he did not consider that poem to be a ballad at all, his argument is a little circular; at all events his judgement on ‘Hero and Leander’ is open to question. Another important critic, E. M. Butler, applies the term ‘philosophical ballad’ readily to Goethe’s efforts in the genre, but does so more grudgingly to Schiller’s and “only in so far as they present different aspects of the problem of fate”. She does not mention this ballad specifically but refers to Schiller’s attempts to show not faults in the characters, but rather the workings of “a merciless, inevitable and irrational fate”.¹⁹

Schiller’s ‘Hero und Leander’ is in twenty-six strophes each of ten trochaic tetrameters (truncated at lines 3, 6, 8 and 10), a narrative metre which imposes conciseness and regular emphasis. The language is direct, and the pace implied by the metre adds to the considerable narrative economy of the work. The later versions by Hood and by More are much longer overall. There is originality in the presentation of the narrative, too, however familiar it may be assumed to be. An insistence on the enormous power of love and the inescapability of fate are the key themes, with love itself dominating the first part, which has, we hear, once even conquered the Styx (4, an ambiguous allusion to Orpheus), and it drives Leander to swim towards Hero’s guiding torch. There are direct classical echoes, too — love warms Leander in the chill waters, as in Ovid — and some of the open questions are answered. But the imagery is ingenious and modern, and the consistent and underlying feeling of threat even in the passages where love is being extolled underlines the real impact of the narrative, the workings of fate through the immanent violence of natural forces.

Schiller shows us at the start — “seht ihr”, ‘look!’ are the opening words — the two towers at Sestos and Abydos at the same time, separated as they are by the roaring (*brausend*) Hellespont, the division between continents. This is familiar enough, but here it is more than a geographical aside: the sea may tear Europe from Asia, but it cannot separate lovers. Hero and Leander are in

poem in Greek, as he wrote in a letter in October 1762, to his friend Friedrich Nicolai: *Lessings Briefe*, ed. Herbert Greiner-Mai, (Berlin and Weimar: Aufbau, 1967), p. 128.

19 Bernd von Heiseler, *Schiller*, trans John Bednall (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1962), p. 158 (the work first appeared in 1959 in German). E. M. Butler, *The Tyranny of Greece over Germany* (Cambridge: CUP, 1935), p. 190–2.

love, but that love is forbidden by the enmity between their families (“der Väter feindlich Zürnen”, their fathers’ inimical rage, 2). The power of love is stressed, and the pair enjoy their relationship for thirty days (7). Schiller stresses too that the danger gives added delight, and makes this into a general (and strikingly put) precept, an interesting pendant to the heavy-footed morals in the medieval versions:

Der hat nie das Glück gekostet,
Der die Frucht des Himmels nicht
Raubend an des Höllenflusses
Schauervollem Rande bricht. (7)

(He has never tasted happiness who has not snatched the fruit of Heaven like a thief from the fearsome banks of the river of Hell).

Schiller now moves us towards Autumn, and this time the familiar dolphins are witnesses to the love. Hero addresses the sea, but with some irony as she recounts the tale of Helle and Phrixos, invoking Helle as the bride and deity of the waters. She sets out her torch, although the stars go out and the night is *gewitterschwer* (15), pregnant with a storm, which develops as Hero prays to Zeus for mercy. The tempest and tumult grow, a literal *Sturm und Drang*, and Hero realises that the calm before it was an illusion: “Falscher Pontus, deine Stille/ War nur des Verrates Hülle” (False Hellespont, your calm was just a disguise for your treachery, 19). The storm becomes stronger, the greatest ships would founder on the rocks, and “im Wind erlischt die Fackel/ Die des Pfades Leuchte war” (in the wind the torch which was to light the way is extinguished, 20). Hero now calls on Aphrodite and all the spirits of the water to bring Leander across safely, and to lift him, again ironically put, “aus dem Grab der Fluten” (out of the watery grave, 22). The sea does indeed become calm and the gentle waves play (*spielen*), but they wash (in the final line of strophe 23) “einen Leichnam an den Strand” (a corpse onto the shore). Hero does not lament or weep, and her heart is cold and despairing; she accepts what fate has imposed upon her:

Ich erkenn’ euch, ernste Mächte!
Strenge treibt ihr eure Rechte
Furchtbar, unerbittlich ein. (25)

(Solemn forces, I acknowledge you! You pursue your rights sternly and inevitably).

But she herself has enjoyed happiness. She has served Venus (Schiller uses both the Greek and Latin names), and now offers a last and willing sacrifice to the goddess. In Bocángel she was resigned to the law of Apollo; here it is to that of Venus. In the final strophe she leaps into the water and the god of the waters embraces them both, making himself their single grave as he flows ever onwards.

There are no accusations or acceptances of guilt, and the most striking element is the acceptance of her fate by Hero, who is very much in the foreground. The dangers of snatching love from the shores of Hell are there throughout, and the ending, which was always inevitable, is accepted and acknowledged. It is part of an eternally fixed story, and Schiller uses that idea when he shows us Hero's state of mind, although she herself does not know the outcome, since she is living within the story. Pleas to Helle or to the entire pantheon are pointless, nature itself is treacherous, and Hero comes to realise this, even if love is (wrongly) thought of as strong enough to find a way (and of course, Orpheus did *not* rescue Eurydice). Hero is a priestess of Aphrodite/Venus (although this seems not to be the main reason for the prohibited love), and it is as such that she accepts fate as the law of the goddess.

The survival of the lovers by means of the existence of the story is the philosophical key, and this was noted in the 1840s by the writer Karl (Theodor Ferdinand) Grün (1817–87) in his commentary on Schiller in a passage that is worth citing, partly because of its concise expression, partly because it can be applied to other versions as well: "Die reine Idealität der Liebe, die realisierte Idee der Liebe kann inmitten der unidealen Lebensmächte nur dadurch gerettet werden, daß sie äußerlich untergeht, um ewig zu bleiben. Und so leben dann die göttlichen Paare Hero und Leander, Romeo und Julia ... grade durch den Untergang ewig fort." (Ideal love, the idea of love realised, can in the face of the less than ideal forces of life only be saved by external destruction, so that it can survive eternally. In that way the divine couples like Hero and Leander, Romeo and Juliet ... live on for all eternity precisely because they were destroyed).²⁰

10 Samuel Gottlieb Bürde, 'Hero und Leander' (Late 18th Century)

Very different from Schiller's work is the slight ballad by the Breslau-born Prussian civil servant Samuel Gottlieb Bürde (1753–1831), known principally (if

20 Karl Grün, *Friedrich Schiller als Mensch, Geschichtsschreiber, Denker und Dichter* (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1844), p. 458f.

at all) as a German translator of Milton. Five strophes of five lines tell the story directly and with extreme simplicity. The first presents Leander, who swims every night to Hero, and the second shows us the stormy night, warning him “Jüngling! wag’ es nicht und schwimme!” (young man, don’t take the risk of swimming). Nevertheless, in the third strophe he hurls himself (*stürzt*) into the water as *der verwegne Schwimmer* (the abandoned swimmer; the adjective might be associated with the etymology of his name) because he sees the light in Hero’s window. In the fourth strophe Hero waits anxiously until Leander’s corpse is cast onto the shore by the tide. The final lines give a good indication of the simplicity of the telling:

Ach! mit flatterndem Gewande
Stürzt sie von des Thurmes Rande,
Aechzt, und stirbt auf seiner Brust.

(Alas! with her gown fluttering she throws herself from the edge of the tower, groans, and dies on his breast).

The echoing of *stürzen* is noticeable, but this is one of the simplest poetic versions of the full narrative.²¹

11 Leigh Hunt, ‘Hero and Leander’ (1819, 1832)

Another far more substantial poet and writer, (James Henry) Leigh Hunt (1784–1859) worked from 1816 onwards on his poem on the theme and published a version in 1819 together with ‘Bacchus and Ariadne’. It was revised and appeared in a different form in the collected poems in 1832 (also in later collections, including that edited by his son, Thornton Hunt, just after his death).²²

21 The text is included with other poems by Bürde in the twelfth volume of the extensive collection by Friedrich (von) Matthiesson (1761–1831), *Lyrische Anthologie. Zwölfte Theil* (Zürich: Füßli, 1805), 165f. The poem ‘Beruhigung’ in the same collection (p. 161) may also have to do with the tale.

22 Leigh Hunt, *Hero and Leander and Bacchus and Ariadne* (London: Ollier, 1819); *The Poetical Works of Leigh Hunt* (London: Moxon, 1832), pp. 121–37 (cited with page-references); *The Poetical Works of Leigh Hunt*, ed. Thornton Hunt (London and New York: Routledge, 1860), pp. 44–50. The standard modern edition is *The Poetical Works of Leigh Hunt*, ed. Humphrey S. Milford (London: OUP, 1923). Both versions of the poem are accessible online. Concentration here is upon the 1832 text, but some critics have focused upon the first version: see Rodney Stenning Edgcombe, *Leigh Hunt and the Poetry of Fancy* (Madison: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1994), pp. 95–106.

The first (and somewhat wordier) version opens with Hero as a priestess of Venus moving away from the crowds to await her lover, and the background to the narrative is provided in the context of the religion of love, with echoes of Ovid. The post-1832 text found in most editions of the collected poetical works commands interest for different reasons. The work is not particularly long and is designated “a song” in two cantos, each made up of a number of irregular strophes in rhymed iambic couplets (with some triplet rhymes). Although this version also assumes the story to be known and begins when the love is already established, it presents the whole narrative simply and directly. The opening strophes engage both with the antiquity of the tale and with its survival. “Old is the tale I tell,” Hunt begins, “and yet as young/ And warm with life as ever minstrel sung” (123), reminding us then that this is a story of lovers “for whom the death-bell tolls.” He then addresses, still by way of a prologue, the need to tell classical stories on their own terms, and not as in schoolbooks or sculpture. This is the rationale: “Truth is forever truth, and love is love.” The story may be old, but it has not aged: “Sweet Hero’s eyes, three thousand years ago/ Were made precisely like the best we know” (124). Furthermore, even when we enter the scene itself, Hero’s tower is itself already old.

Her tower is near the temple of Venus, and as the story begins she, an orphan priestess, is awaiting Leander, “a naked bridegroom”. Spies and the spitefulness of Leander’s wealthy kin have tried to prevent the relationship, and Leander must swim to her tower. Hero is able to think only of whether Leander will come; the echoes of Ovid are strong here, also in the figure of Hero’s nurse-companion, who is here a lower-ranking priestess. Night falls (Hunt provides a selection of sensuous images), Hero dedicates a lock of her hair to the goddess, then lights a torch, which she takes to the top of her tower, Leander swims towards it and is admitted. This brings the first canto to an end.

The love continues all Summer. More visual attention is paid to the torch than in many texts; as Leander swims towards it, it sometimes dims as Hero shields it, and on summer nights it is sometimes not even needed. Hunt also offers an interesting answer to one of the rarely posed questions of the open narrative base, namely whether the torch is noticed by anyone else. It is taken to be a special star shining over Venus’s favourite, and even the fishermen maintain a reverent distance.

Autumn passes, and sometimes Hero begs Leander not to come, while thinking constantly of “All that he was, and said, and looked, and dared” (133). The idea of daring is the key, as Leander continues his journeys even when there will clearly be a storm. Hero hopes that he will come before the storm and prays for him, but he is only halfway there. She waves her torch, but a sudden wind blows him off course, he misses the torch, thinks he sees it and does

not. As he drowns he thinks of death, of the loss of his friends, he thinks of prayers to Neptune and the sea goddesses, and to Venus, then of what Hero will feel, although there is no hint of blame. He speaks her name once, and then dies. Hero's own end is presented with commendable simplicity. She lights the torch "a thousand times" and calls out to him, but at dawn she sees his corpse, throws herself from the tower "and joined her drowned love." (137) There is no protracted anguish, no complaint, just the acceptance, less overt than in Schiller and echoing more the conclusions of some of the Spanish romances, that if he is dead, so must she be. What happens to the lovers afterwards, either in this life or the next, is not an issue in either version, and there is no comforting metamorphosis, communal grave, or reunion in Elysium: this was a human love story, it was a delight while it flourished, their love was true, and however old the tale may be, the feelings involved are not. The story is presented for its own sake without a moral, and the prefatory part is both a reason for telling it and an instruction on how to receive it. There is a strong anacreontic feel about the presentation of the love, which is heralded by the odours of the night, the silence of the birds and then the voice of the nightingale, the dew on the myrtle and so on. There are also medieval echoes amongst the classical ones: the spies whose role it is to disrupt the relationship figure regularly in the poetry of courtly love. However, "truth is forever truth."

12 Thomas Hood, 'Hero and Leander' (1827)

Thomas Hood (1799–1845) dedicated his ballad to another poet, Samuel Taylor Coleridge. His poem is longer than Hunt's and three times the length of that by Schiller, and apart from the dedicatory opening it is told in 130 sextillas, rhyming ababcc, which have the feel of extended quatrains. Although Hood was known as a satirical writer (and did write a brief comic verse on the subject), 'Hero and Leander' is one of his serious poems.²³ His version, however, stands out, because in spite of the balladic style, it does not simply give the story. Rather, it takes it as known, and presents one central aspect — the death of Leander — in a new and unusual way. Hood takes the constant that Leander drowns, and reshapes it with a sea-maid, who loves him and carries him off. In contrast with the innovation by Mangelsdorf half a century earlier of Cupid's revenge, which forms a framework, Hood's variation is within the narrative itself.

23 Thomas Hood, *Serious Poems* (London: Routledge, 1886), pp. 67–98. The strophes are numbered and thus cited.

The work stresses at the outset that this is a well-known and tragic tale of “ancient grief”, of how “Hero on the drowned Leander falls”, and the speaker speculates on whether these tragic tales were told so that we might enjoy our own happiness all the more by contrast (1–2). Now, however, the poem proper opens with the story already well under way and Leander already a potentially tragic figure because he must leave Hero (“a widow where he found a bride,” 6) to return to Abydos after a night with her. Reluctantly he dives into the Hellespont, which seems like the Styx, and in a subtle reference to Orpheus he often turns to look back at a statue-like Hero.

This will be Leander’s final journey. Only relatively rarely is he drowned on his return, although this does realise the plea placed into his mouth by Martial. Hero implores Jove for assistance, and says that Leander is carrying two, himself and his love, an echo perhaps of the folk-ballads. Leander, however, is thinking of Hero and their next meeting as he swims with increasing weariness. We are given a physical glimpse of him as the sun lights him in mid-stream; he is pallid, but with an artificial bloom, like the deceit of consumption. The image is very much of its time, but it is an emblem of the narrative: even when things look positive (or people look healthy), death is always there.

Leander, however, now suddenly encounters a “Naiad, or Nereid, or Syren fair” (26), a supernatural sea-maiden, whose aspect puts into him the literal fear (or awareness) of death. He envisages Hero left alone, as the sea-maid exercises her “fell design” to have him as her own. He embraces the creature — this is a death-scene mythologised — and is carried by her beneath the waves, as “Hero’s name dies bubbling on his lips” (45). Having brought Leander to her home on the sea-bed, the enamoured sea-maid, dazzled by his beauty, is baffled by his unresponsiveness. She is not a mortal, and is unaware of death, and promises him all the joys of her underwater world, thinking that he is merely asleep. Although supernatural, she gradually realises that death cannot be reversed, and weeps tears of pearl. Love and death are fused as an experience. She resolves nevertheless to bring him back into the sunlight to try and revive him and carries him to the shore, kissing his lips (as Hero does in other poems), but there is still no life, and she swims away.

Other sea-beings come and take away Leander’s body, and the now doubly bereft sea-maid calls out the name she heard Leander use as he died — that of Hero — but at the last she has to return with her grief to her home in the deep. The day ends, and almost at the end of the poem we are shown Hero in her tower at Sestos with the torch that used to guide Leander in his onward journey, but which he will no longer see. She realises that Leander is dead and hears the grieving voice from the deep apparently calling upon her, Hero. Then

Oh! dost thou live under the deep, deep sea?
 I thought such love as thine could never die;
 If thou hast gain'd an immortality
 From the kind pitying sea-god, so will I;
 And this false cruel tide that used to sever
 Our hearts, shall be our common home for ever! (127)

Ironically, Hero and Leander are quite separate from each other, the one dead, the other alive, but not understanding, any more than the sea-maid had done. Leander has not gained immortality, and the sea-god was not kind. Hero proposes a kind of metamorphosis for them both, that they shall be like twin pearls, but she now hurls herself into the sea (which had divided but now unites them) and dies. At the last it is the sea-maid, whose own love has caused the death of them both, and who now

wept,
 And in a crystal cave her corse enshrined,
 No meaner sepulchre should Hero find! (130)

Hood's ballad presents a different narrative, the new death of Leander supposedly based on an "old bas-relief", which is mentioned more than once, in which the Hellespont does not simply take him, but in which an elemental carries him off, not understanding, as nothing in nature can, that humans are mortal. The "tale of ancient grief" (2) is still there in essence, but the image of Leander being claimed by the sea has been realised in this alternative love-story. Hood is also aware that there is no real union after death, despite Hero's thoughts. Death separates, and the only immortality that Leander and Hero have is in the story itself. Leander has disappeared, and Hero is enclosed forever in a crystal cave.

13 Ludovic de Vauzelles, 'Héro et Léandre' (1852)

The poem 'Héro et Léandre' by Ludovic (Louis) de Vauzelles (1828–88) is again not strictly a ballad, but it is still a concise version of the whole story in rhymed alexandrine couplets with some dialogue.²⁴ The work is self-consciously part

24 Ludovic de Vauzelles, *Oeuvres poétiques* (Orléans: H. Herluison, 1888), I, 103–117 (online). The poem was written in his home-town of Orléans and dated October 1852. The volume has an extended (around seventy pages) biography of the poet as a preface.

of the tradition: Musaios is echoed, and the poet seems to set out reluctantly on the task of talking about these famous lovers: “Eh bien! je vais tenter cette oeuvre périlleuse” (p. 104, Very well, I’ll have a go at this perilous task). It opens with a distinction between the earthly and the spiritual Venus (a motif important in the drama), and we hear that Leander has promised to come to Hero after seven nights. Ovid’s influence is clear, but there are small variations on the overall theme. Hero thinks she hears Leander, but in fact it is Panope, her nurse, sent by her parents, who wonders first whom Hero thought she had heard, and then asks “À quoi bon ce flambeau?” (p. 106, What is this torch for?). The love story is then told in retrospect as Hero waits for Leander on this tempestuous night. The dolphin dream is present, but the nurse says that Leander will surely not dare to swim. However, Hero insists that *son époux*, her husband, will keep his promise, even though the storm rages, “Déchainant à grand bruit la foudre et les éclairs” (p. 114, unleashing with great noise the thunder and lightning). Leander does of course undertake this final crossing, but he drowns calling her name; however, the storm has killed him, not the extinguishing of the flame:

Le flambeau qui brillait sur la tour de Sestos
S’éteint au même instant: redoutable présage! (p. 115)

(The torch which shone from the tower of Sestos went out at the same instant: a striking prophecy!)

In the familiar zeugma, Leander’s life and the torch are extinguished at the same time. There is no extended death-scene for Hero, nor is there any afterlife or metamorphosis. The demise of Hero is not the author’s most poetic couplet:

Héro, de désespoir et d’amour transportée,
Du sommet de la tour s’était précipitée.

(Hero, carried away by despair and love threw herself from the top of the tower).

but the nurse has them buried, and the epitaph inscribed on their tomb serves as a commentary on the tale:

“Ci-gisent deux amants, couple aussi beau qu’aimable,
Des rigueurs du Destin exemple mémorable.” (p. 116)

(Here lie two lovers, a pair as beautiful as they were delightful, a memorable example of the stern force of Fate).

The concluding comment from the poet to this interestingly self-conscious version picks up an image used before: the torch of Sestos still shines out and has guided the poet's own sails safely into port.

14 Ludwig Eichrodt, 'Alte Geschichte' (1856)

The lesser-known but prolific Biedermeyer poet, Ludwig Eichrodt (1827–1892) included, also around the middle of the nineteenth century, the significantly named 'Alte Geschichte', old tale, tale from antiquity, in the "Geschichten und Gestalten" (tales and characters) section of his collection *Leben und Liebe*, life and love.²⁵ Eichrodt's version of the tale is as simple as that by Bürde, although it is longer, sixteen strophes, this time quatrains of trochaic tetrameters with the second and fourth lines truncated. Eichrodt was known as a humorous writer, and some parts might even seem slightly flippant. Thus the first strophes:

"Lieben, wies nicht Andre können,
Will ich dich, mein Kind,
Wenns die Götter nur vergönnen,
Und nicht neidisch sind."

Sprach zu Hero einst Leander,
Als er sie gesehn,
"Lieben wollen wir einander,
Bis wir untergehn!"

("My child, I want to love you as no others could, provided the gods allow it, and are not jealous." Thus Leander once upon a time spoke to Hero, when he first saw her; "We shall love each other until we both perish.")

Nevertheless, the sea is still wild when Leander swims across to his lover, who is *liebeskrank*, love-sick.

²⁵ Ludwig Eichrodt, *Leben und Liebe* (Frankfurt/M.: Heinrich Keller, 1856), pp. 275–7 and online.

There are plenty of classical references, some a little abstruse: “laß dich loben,/Amathusia” (praise be to Amathusia) invokes Aphrodite through one of her numerous local epithets; but the gods are as malevolent as ever, mocking Leander as the sea refuses to carry him anymore, even though Leander had assured Hero that “Mich behüten deine Küsse/ Vor dem Untergehn” (your kisses will protect me from perishing). Leander uses the same word, *untergehen*, to perish, to go under, that he had used with prophetic irony at the start. After Leander drowns, the sea becomes calm and mirror-smooth, while Helios shines down in unconcerned greatness. Hero’s death is simply assumed.

The final strophe not only confirms the seriousness of the presentation after all, but does so effectively, with an echo of the German folk-ballads, specifically the “Ach Mutter, liebe Mutter” variation:

Habt ihr, jammert eine Mutter,
 Hero nicht gesehn?
 Jammernd sah man eine Mutter
 An dem Meere stehn.

(Have you, weeps a mother, have you seen Hero? A mother was seen standing by the sea and weeping).

15 Carl Robert Zache, *Hero and Leander. A Poem* (1884)

Hood’s ballad had two descendants, at least in respect of its form, in America, which may be taken together. Sadly, neither is poetically impressive, and they differ from each other and certainly from Hood in various ways. The very existence of a privately published ballad of Hero and Leander in the later nineteenth century in the American mid-West, however, says much about the durability of the narrative. Carl Robert Zache (1859–1926) was born in Germany, but his father took the family from Saxony to Milwaukee, and Carl seems to have remained in Wisconsin, a centre for German immigrants, until his death. He worked as a journalist and published this poem at his own expense in his mid-twenties, dedicating it to a prominent citizen of Racine, Wisconsin, Stephen Bull (1822–1913).²⁶ Bull was a distinguished local figure, by then in his sixties

26 Carl Robert Zache, *Hero and Leander. A Poem* (New York: published by the author, 1884). The text is cited by page, and that it is available online is a tiny measure of immortality after all.

(there is still a school named after him in Racine), and one can only wonder what he thought of the offering. Zache's poem, over fifty pages long, in more than 150 of the ababcc sextillas used by Hood, is declared in his preface to be an early effort, on an old subject "put forth in new trimmings". An introduction gives a summary of the story, blaming the prohibition of the love on Hero's "relatives and position". Possibly Zache's German background had given him some awareness of the classics and inspired his effort. The work is now forgotten, in this case mercifully so, and it is not necessary to devote too much space to it, although quotation is hard to resist. It is also difficult to recall that this is not (at least, so one assumes) an intentional parody: it is not consistently bad enough. Rather it seems to be in the great tradition of William McGonagall or, in a different genre, of Zache's almost exact contemporary, Amanda McKittrick Ros.

The work opens with an image of love as a destructive force, and the power (and joys) of love seem to be the central preoccupation. Leander's rhetoric of seduction is extensive on this occasion, but unusual in its detailed fiscal imagery: there is much about loans, investments and interest, possibly inspired by Hood's brief image of the rich merchant in his strophe 11, but perhaps more by the fact that Zache's dedicatee was a prominent businessman. Hood does, nevertheless, seem to have been a major (unmentioned) influence, quite apart from the verse-form. A few quotations will suffice to give the flavour of the whole. Leander first "seeks the altar where she prays/ To have her hear what with his mouth he says" (2). The poet regularly has trouble filling up his pentameters, and this reminder that he speaks *with his mouth* is not an isolated case. Leander's utterances themselves are initially less than coherent, though possibly this is intentional:

"O look," begins he (strange prayer to Love's Queen)
 "My voice goes bankrupt in redeeming thought;
 Words piled on words, or scene succeeding scene,
 Could not release my meaning as they ought;
 And if they could, my late attesting eyes
 Would prove it faulty and my thoughts unwise." (2)

A further passage from this speech should give an idea of the general competence of the work; the use of the word 'toilet' is unfortunate to the modern ear, but it was always a dubious rhyme in a line that does not scan well in any case; the use of the Oxford comma in the alliterative entymological line is punctilious, however:

See how the rose tends to the violet,
 Which lends good color to the queen's green rug;
 Heaven's gentle tears drop from her toilet,
 And fall upon a beetle, bee, or bug
 That, scared, flies hence to find the little flower,
 Where it does sit, wet by the summer shower. (6)

Once again, there may be an echo of Hood here (strophe 13), and his version is never too far off.²⁷ Somewhat surprisingly, the rhetoric *does* seem to work on Hero, leaving her “undone, fearful, and inflamed” (7) — she has dreamt of love but only now feels it. The text is not without occasional interest: the martyrdom of love seen in writers like Luzán is echoed in the notion that “thus it is that love love’s hangman is” (9), and it is the light from Hero’s window as she remains sleepless, thinking of him, that causes Leander to set out. Classically, too, he “swam for Europe’s shore from Asia’s plain” (12). Where Hood shows Leander executing an elegant high dive into the waters (strophe 17f.), Zache tells us in more detail that Leander’s “head buoys up, he turns upon his side/ That his broad chest may better plow the tide”. This is perhaps the sole version to indicate in all seriousness that Leander favours the front crawl.

The encounter of the lovers is full of overblown and not entirely coherent imagery involving wild beasts. Hero herself is unable to express her love (“Where are the words that inkle at my meaning”, 27: the verb is rare, but apparently *does* exist), and she does talk about her father’s hate, which will impede their love. The consummation is put more coyly than Leander’s evasion in Ovid, but sadly, a plausible line is immediately cancelled by one patently dictated by the needs of rhyme (more or less) and metre: “Her girdle his strong arms — his necklace hers,/ Both now enjoy what poets dream in verse” (27).

The tone of this version should by now be clear, and the stream of images continues as we move on to the tragic outcome. Leander thinks he sees the lamp, and his eagerness drives him on to his final swim. Hero’s anxieties as to whether he is alive or dead occupy a great deal of space, but her decision to join him “in his large tomb” (52) is rapid. The final strophe may be cited as a fitting crown to the whole. The point of the undertaking was to show us a love-tragedy, and the poet is constantly inviting the reader, with far less subtlety than did Schiller, to look at things:

27 Possibly unconsciously, however. Hood’s lovers are separated by the sea as “That cold divorcer” (strophe 18). Zache tells us on p. 33: “Love’s ended feast divorces dish and spoon”.

See, see, O see what never yet was seen;
 Departed lovers seek their bridal bed!
 They sleep beneath a canopy of green;
 They would not wake if it were colored red.
 By chance her corpse does fall across his own
 And all is still to hear the love-god moan!

Hood's sea-maid, calling out "Hero" across the waves, is perhaps still lurking behind this. But at least we may note that, whatever the first two lines of this stanza actually mean, and in spite of the absurd fourth line, there is no happy union in death, and even the conjunction of the corpses seems to be an accident. The reader can only hope that they are indeed joined together in Leander's accommodatingly large (*metri gratia*) tomb.

16 Brookes More, *Hero and Leander* (1926)

A second American narrative version appeared some decades after that by Zache, again in the sextilla form used by Hood, but of only about half the length. Brookes More (1859–1942) was Zache's contemporary, and came originally from Ohio, though he moved to the East coast and lived and worked there. His reputation is higher than that of Zache (admittedly no great achievement), and he published a substantial amount of poetry (including a group of poems about the First World War). More significantly he translated Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. His *Hero and Leander*, which was published as an independent little book, appeared towards the end of his life.²⁸ Where Zache's work is simply inept, that by More, though hardly a great work, demands attention for his handling of some of the unanswered questions. In his introduction he makes much of Ovid and gives as his reason for presenting the story the fact that Ovid did not in the *Heroides* write a complete version, or even exhaust its possibilities. He is somewhat disparaging of Musaios (although he seems

²⁸ Brookes More, *Hero and Leander* (Boston: Cornhill, 1926). This is cited by page-reference. The text occupies only twenty pages. Were one inclined to condemn Zache for vanity publishing, it might be noted that at the end of this volume there are reprints of favourable reviews of More's other works. His war-poems, *Songs of a Red Cross Nurse* (Boston: Cornhill, 1918) are nevertheless of interest. A biography of More was written by his son-in-law, Wilmon Brewer, *Life and Poems of Brookes More* (Boston: Marshall Jones, 1940), which stresses the importance of More's move to the East coast. The selection does not include this poem.

to think that the Marlowe-Chapman poem is a translation), partly because he knew that Musaios was not, as often assumed, the ancient epic poet, and hence should not take precedence over Ovid. Rather than blending Ovid and Musaios, this version is more like Ovid *versus* Musaios. That Musaios bases the prohibition of the love on the fact that Hero is a priestess of Aphrodite plainly caused difficulties for More, and this is not unreasonable. Marlowe, for example, has Leander pointing out the paradox of denying love in the name of the goddess of love, and by the nineteenth century Grillparzer (and his fore-runner, Büssell) had side-lined the problem by making Hero serve Aphrodite Urania, the heavenly embodiment of chaste or intellectual love, rather than the worldly Aphrodite Pandemos, a distinction largely from Plato's *Symposium*. Aphrodite does have a range of different titles, however, and there were indeed different temples. Possibly More has Pausanias's travel-writing and Xenophon's *Symposium* in mind, as well as Plato's. It is in this context, at all events, that More tries to justify a major and somewhat startling element in his poem. "A more careful investigation" he claims, "shows us that Hero, being a Vestal of Aphroditë, was in the grip of a depraved clan of priests who at that time were for the corruption of the worship of Aphroditë" (viii). Where the intriguing notion of those depraved priests (a clan?) actually came from defies investigation, although it may just be a slightly over-heated re-imagining of the distinction between Plato's two Aphrodites. More not only varies Venus and Aphroditë as names, but considers that their cults were different, though this is also somewhat vague. Finally, he dismisses Hood's poem with faint praise: it is "very beautiful" but "almost limited to a description of mermaids and the drowning of Leander" (p. ix). There is, to be sure, a small amount of truth in this assessment, although Hood's concentration is on one single sea maid (mermaids are surely a little different?); but More uses the same metre as Hood and the earlier poem still seems to have been influential.

Ovid, though, is the controlling force, specifically Leander's letter, and the greater part of More's poem uses the letter to Hero, written while the storm rages and she waits for him (and anticipates his death). Leander has stripped off his clothes three times, but "ice-mailed Boreas" prevents him from swimming (5). The mechanics of the epistolary motif are not fully worked out in this text, but the device allows for a retrospective view of the relationship, as in Ovid, albeit with the addition of those most un-Ovidian priests. The "schemes and hate/ Of priest-tormentors" cause Leander particular concern, though we do not yet know why.

Leander recalls how he had first fallen in love with Hero at Sestos, and then, having tried for two days to find her again, had been given directions by a priestess and had seen on the shore what he first took to be a sea-nymph or

indeed a goddess, who rises naked from the waves like Aphrodite (although he calls her Diana.) Hero had then explained that she had once been a shepherdess, abducted by “some priests of Aphroditē” who promised to train her in “deep-love-mysteries” (8). However, they have kept her “virgin-pure/ Concealing every phallic mystery” (9) with a view to selling her virginity to a rich merchant. Having observed her behaviour at the festival, they had become suspicious and hidden her, but she had escaped while they were drunk — their depravity is therefore quite extensive — and fled to the sea, where she was hiding from them, naked,

For those bad priests first stripped me of all clothes,
Intending so to conquer my reserve:
Oh! how my inmost spirit loathes
The thought of those that easily can swerve
From true religion to depravity
As often as their want of it may be. (10)

The strophe is representative of the versifying, and the mildly salacious presentation of Hero Anadyomene matches the image of the naked Leander in Ovid and elsewhere.

Leander declares his identity and promises to save her, explaining that he fell in love with her when he saw her as a dancer at the festival and was struck — in a curiously mixed image — by “the lightning-stroke of Love’s hot thirst” (11). He proposes that they return to Sestos and escape in his boat to a tower nearby where she will be secure, and where they can seal their relationship: “And in the strong right of The-First-Great-Cause,/ There shall we be united” (12). The love is thus spiritualised above the Greek/Roman gods (who do have a role later). He will have to leave her, however, and be guided on his return by the lamp. Leander refers from the start to their “vows” and their “hallowed love”, and More is at pains to stress the complete legitimacy of the relationship.

Leander recalls all of this, telling the reader that “There .../ Was rightly pledged the marriage bond” (13). The question of right is reiterated, and Hero is exculpated from any betrayal of vows. Hero had not wanted him to leave, but Leander had arranged for the familiar old nurse to come and look after her, although he had noticed that a suspicious priest had found his boat and untied it, allowing it to drift away. This explains the later need for swimming. At the end of his extended epistolary recollection, Leander now thinks of the delights of their love, “So wonderful that words cannot contain” (16), a far more prosaic version than Ovid’s evasion.

Meanwhile, Hero implores the Gods (who are always capitalised) to calm the storm, though they are deaf to her entreaties, and Leander waits. Eventually, however, Fear and Love overcome Caution and Wisdom (all capitalized), as Leander, afraid, too, that the priests might have found Hero, decides to brave the waters, throws off his clothes and sets off, asking Neptune and all the sea-creatures for aid. The depraved priests have again kept the story moving, therefore, since it is his fear of them that explains why he chooses to swim on a stormy night, a fear less subtle than, say, that of being thought irresolute. The description of Leander's final swim, however, seems to combine Marlowe's vision of an over-enthusiastic Neptune treating Leander as Ganymede with Hood's uncomprehendingly amorous sea-maiden. Neptune agrees to help, but sends his chief water-nymph, his "Queen-Mermaid" (19) to carry Leander; she, as a heterosexual version of Marlowe's Neptune, does indeed aid him, but falls in love with him herself. Despite More's criticism of Hood's overdone mermaids, his own Queen-Mermaid nevertheless echoes strongly Hood's fatal sea-nymph.

Gaining strength (rather than weakening, as is usual), Leander calls to Hero that Love is conquering the rough seas, but the Queen-Mermaid is jealous and returns to Neptune, complaining that he is interested only in "that raped virgin" and not in her. Since she is no longer carrying him, Leander has been abandoned to the sea, and now Triton calls on the familiar dolphins for aid after the betrayal, but this seems to make things more difficult. At all events, the description of Leander's predicament is baffling in its sudden apparent philosophical leap to the present day:

...
 Leander struggled in that storm-tossed sea:
 As every hostile force of Nature, there
 Chaotic intermingled all that we,
 With superstitious dread (gods, demons — worse)
 Brain-filled, have mixed in our sick universe. (23)

Leander dies, calling out "Hero! Hero! it is only death — ". Hero hears these last words and throws herself ("shrieking, shrieking", which is possibly deliberately unpoetic, and arguably more realistic than her extended complaints in earlier versions) into the sea to join him, and "with her last breath,/Answered 'Leander! it is only death'" (23).

More's self-indulgent slim volume, published in his sixties, is not in the last analysis much better than Zache's, which was done in his twenties. Whatever Zache's motivation may have been, however, More's approach seems to

be analytical. He had translated the *Metamorphoses* and clearly knew the *Heroides*, but he is trying to re-present a story that he knows was fixed in some respects in antiquity, but which had questions and problems which he addresses. It is never clear why the love has been prohibited, and More patent-ly felt that turning Hero into a priestess is unsatisfactory, as she would then be guilty of breaking a solemn vow, and in any case, he is following Ovid and not the Johnny-come-lately Grammarian, from whom he has nevertheless taken the temple setting. Similarly, parental or social objection to the love might imply that Hero was somehow wantonly defiant. More does not want the love to be illicit in any respect, and rewrites the story to that end, making Leander the saviour of the oppressed Hero as well as her lover.

More's invention of the depraved priests covers pretty well all of the problems.²⁹ Hero is entirely blameless, she is breaking no vows, since she is no more than a captive shepherdess, forced to be a vestal and a temple dancer, destined for sexual trafficking. Her relationship with Leander is hallowed and consummated in the sight of The-First-Great-Cause, presumably the Demiurge; the rather abrupt switch from Ovid to Thomas Aquinas seems to mean that the relationship must be interpreted as a marriage in the eyes of God. Moreover, it is right that she should be rescued. Even why Leander has to swim is here given a rationalisation: his boat was discovered, and thus he has to avoid the priests some other way. The priests are, incidentally, also likely to spot the lamp, another problem not often raised, but which here becomes an additional voiced fear. More focuses mainly upon Leander, whose background is noble, whereas Hero is an orphan shepherdess, a kind of visitor from the pastoral, whose virginity was to be preserved for the benefit of a seafarer's gold at a later stage. Their love — or rather, Love — is a victim of external human as well as dangerous natural forces, the treacherous Hellespont turned into a betraying sea-goddess who feels herself spurned. The wicked priests, odd though their invention may be, are a memorable addition to the history of the narrative, the ultimate development of the false nun of the early ballads.

Certainly there is no hubris here, and no hint of a moral: the tragic story is an end in itself. Nor is there any union in the afterlife or happy metamorphosis, but while the double death is the end of the given narrative in any case, More's ending is still awkward. Those shared last words — "it is only death" — sound far more meaningful than, on reflection, they actually are. More's intention

29 One wonders whether More was aware of the figure of the high priest in Grillparzer's *Des Meeres und der Liebe Wellen*? In Arrigo Boito's opera libretto, which may have been influenced by Grillparzer (and even in an early film), the high priest does have designs upon Hero himself.

seems to have been to tidy up what he saw as loose ends. Replacing Neptune's advances in Marlowe with those of the Queen-Mermaid may indicate a desire to conventionalise Marlowe, and she herself is brighter, or at least more proactive than Hood's equivalent, though both personify the cruel sea. As poetry this version has quite deservedly been forgotten, but it is of cultural interest, even if its classical, modern and occasionally Tudor elements do not blend especially comfortably, and the answers provided for the open questions are at best eccentric. More's poem is designed to present a tragedy of completely guiltless lovers, but those depraved priests are hard to forget.

17 Summary

In the European and insular folk-ballads, the story is usually presented for its own sake, and it is subject to considerable reduction, sometimes moving so far away as to be no longer clearly about Hero and Leander. In the later literary ballads — and we might also include the broadsides — the classical tale is restored, even if it falls occasionally into the hands of less able poets, and sometimes comes close to burlesque. With the more skilled literary ballads comes, too, the philosophical approach that the only real life for this idealized love in an un-ideal world is the eternity of the narrative itself. Literary and folk ballads alike stress the malevolent workings of fate upon the lovers, and the protagonists often face up to and accept this in a matter-of-fact way. That there are two American quasi-ballad versions influenced by Hood is of interest unfortunately only for the history of the tradition, even if both are memorable in their own ways. It is of greater significance to the reception history that the theme not only appears in modern Armenian, but could also be satisfactorily handled, quite recognisably (though the lamp has been lost), in a brief American pop-song which is close to the folk-ballad and is far more competent within its own terms of reference than many literary works.

Focal Points: Reflections in the Lyric

Lampe d'Héro, ne t'étiens pas!



Epic poetical treatments of the story of Hero and Leander are relatively easy to categorize, even though there can be some overlap between serious or comic versions, but lyrics — in the broadest sense — are more varied both in form and in approach. The use of the theme in the short(er) serious, post-medieval lyric must, even more than in other genres, depend upon the assumption that the audience is aware of the whole story, since there is no expository space. Donne's two-line epigram illustrates the point. The focus of an individual lyric may be upon the whole story or on a single scene, such as the parting of the lovers at dawn, Leander's final swim, Hero waiting with her lamp, or finding the body of Leander and then taking her own life. It may even be upon an object, such as the lamp.

The shortest lyric reflection is in the epigram, here established by Martial. Longer lyrics may or may not be specifically designed for music, and they may be either entirely free-standing, or included in a wider context. A poem may present the story objectively, or it may direct the reader by offering comments on the events and their implications. Lyrics may be dramatized, placed into the mouth of one protagonist or of both. The tale may also be internalised, relating the plight of the lovers to the speaker's own situation; there are interesting examples of this by women writers, in a Spanish sonnet by Doña Hipólita de Narváez in the sixteenth century, or by Louise Ackermann in French in the nineteenth. Perhaps the most obvious example of a personal approach, finally, is Byron's ironic piece 'Written After Swimming from Sestos to Abydos', which is in one sense not really about Hero and Leander at all, except insofar as the poem would be pointless without reference to the story.

Given that there is a modern lyric tradition running from the sixteenth century (and we nudge back into the fifteenth with some of the Spanish writers), with relevant pieces in very many languages, the examination of that tradition will necessarily be incomplete, even more so than with other genres. Selection must depend upon widely accepted quality, which guarantees the inclusion of

Donne, many of the Spanish poets, Hölderlin, Rossetti, Housman and others, upon originality of approach, or upon cultural interest. Keats and Byron both fall into this final category, as do less well-known writers like Charles Tennyson Turner. Some formal sub-groups, on the other hand, demand special attention, such as the baroque epigram, or the extensive Iberian tradition of sonnets on Leander's death associated with a celebrated and much-imitated example by Garcilaso de la Vega.

Some lyrics are difficult to track down. This applies not only to the very large numbers of poems in the Spanish and Portuguese Golden Age, but also to more modern writers. Reference sources point to poems by Frank Morgan, James Urquhart, Malcolm Cowley and others, and as an example, the first poem by the very prolific English poet John Drinkwater (1882–1937) seems to have been his 'The Death of Leander', which appeared in the Oxford High School Magazine in July 1903. It provided the title for his first collection *The Death of Leander and Other Poems* (Birmingham: Cornish, 1906), but he did not include it in his collected works, from 1908 onwards, and it is hard to find. There will doubtless be many more individual poems hidden unnoticed behind titles which do not contain any of the key names or themes. It would even be of interest, though it would be difficult to undertake systematically, to note poets who do *not* tackle the theme.¹ The German Theodor Däubler (1876–1934), for example, wrote on many classical themes, but apparently not on this one; nor do any of the poets who served in the Dardanelles in either of the world wars appear to allude to it. Although some songs are included here, sung ballads (and ballads which have been set to music) are treated elsewhere. There are also some short burlesques which have been grouped with the usually rather longer comic treatments.

It is not even possible to consider to any great extent the many casual allusions to the tale *within* other lyrics, though these certainly assume knowledge of and attest to familiarity with the tale. Examples range from that by Sir Walter Raleigh (1554–1618) in the enigmatic fragment first printed in the nineteenth century, 'The Last Booke of the Ocean to Scinthia' ("On Sestos' shore, Leander's late resort/ Hero hath left no lamp to guide her love"), to when Rudyard Kipling (1865–1936) asks in his 'A Song of Travel' "Where's the lamp that Hero lit/ Once to call Leander home?". Edmund Waller (1606–87) refers to the wife of Charles I

1 In modern media, too, see the 2016 'Hero and Leander' poem in the blog The Shaved Poet (<https://eyeamross.com/>). Even more subtly, there are certainly poems where the legend may have been in the poet's mind but is not developed. I offer as one suggestion only the 'Ode to Aphrodite' of Lady Margaret Sackville (1881–1963) which is about the moods and dangers of the sea, and places the shrine of Aphrodite somewhere "Where, when the flickering altar fires are vain,/ The flaming storm may light her festival": *Lyrics* (London: Herbert and Daniel, 1912), p. 31f.

admiring a tapestry of “What old Musaeus so Divinely sung” in his poem ‘Of the danger His Majesty (being Prince) escap’d on the Road at Saint Andrews’, while his contemporary Sir Aston Cokain (1608–84) warns in his ‘Remedy for Love’ against reading Musaios at all, since love-stories may be harmful: “Musaeus English’d by two Poets shun;/ It may undo you though it be well done”.² Samuel Daniel (1562–1619) refers to himself in one of his Delia sonnets (38) as “thy Leander striving in these waves”. Just as medieval works list unfortunate lovers, a sonnet by Augustín de Salazar y Torres (1636–75) on the *tiranía del amor*, love’s tyranny, invokes Dido, Semele and Pyramus as well as Leander, “whose grave was in the sea”. Allusions can, however, be more complex, as when, in another Spanish example, Quevedo refers to a woman’s golden hair as the waves of the sea, through which his heart moves like Leander “in the sea of fire”.³ One of the most charming of the casual references, finally, is that by John Davies of Hereford (ca 1565–1618), whose sonnet ‘If There Were ...’ postulates a Hellespont of cream between the poet and his “milk-white mistress” through which he would swim “Leander-like” to demonstrate his “love’s extreme”, or better, would find an apple-pie to use as a boat. In case of the (probable) storm, he would find a pancake to use as a bridge. The poem is not a burlesque of Hero and Leander, simply an allusion to the story in a memorably whimsical context.⁴

The well-known references to Leander and the Hellespont by George Gordon, Lord Byron (1788–1824) both in his separate poem of 1810 and in *Don Juan* do need to be looked at in more detail later, but at the start of the second canto of *The Bride of Abydos: A Turkish Tale* (2, 1) he reminds us in eighteen lines (á propos of the stormy Hellespont) of the night when Love “forgot to save/ The young — the beautiful — the brave”. Hero’s “turret-torch” blazes high, though all the other signs are warning the unnamed Leander not to go. But he sees only the light of Love and hears Hero’s song in his head. No more is said, and full knowledge of the tale is assumed. Byron adds a comment on its antiquity and underlines the message that it should encourage similar faithfulness:

2 Booth, “Hero’s Afterlife”, nn. 9–11 refers to several allusions, including those by Waller and Cokain; even slighter is that in Abraham Fraunce (fl. 1587–1633).

3 Augustín de Salazar y Torres, *Cythara de Apolo, Primera Parte* (Madrid: Francisco Sanches, 1681), p. 55 (online). For the Quevedo sonnet, see Ignacio Eugene Navarrete, *Orphans of Petrarch: Poetry and Theory in the Spanish Renaissance* (Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: U. California Press, 1994), p. 216 (text and a detailed discussion).

4 The poem is in *Love Songs and Sonnets*, ed. Peter Washington (London: Everyman’s Library, 1997), p. 163. It is based, says the poet, on his love of “homely meats” like cream, pancakes and pippin-pies.

That tale is old, but Love anew
May nerve young hearts to prove as true.⁵

1 Epigrams and Epitaphs

The concise form of the epigram, which overlaps with the epitaph especially in this context, demands knowledge of the story, and the influence of the plea to the waves placed in Leander's mouth by Martial is very extensive.⁶ This study opened with the epigram by John Donne (1572–1631) based upon the four elements and condensing the whole story into two lines and a title, and several German baroque epigrams were directly influenced by Donne.

The closest imitation is the 'Leander und Hero' by the only slightly younger Georg Rodolf Weckherlin (1584–1655), who also puts the words into the mouths of the dead lovers as a speaking epitaph. The latter is an important concept here; as with Donne, they are dead, but live on to give us these words:

Wie uns die lieb ein liecht, ein luft das leben gab,
und wie ein feur (uns beed verliebend) uns erleuchtet;
so hat ein wasser auch erdrenckend uns befeuchtet,
und nu von einer erd bedecket uns ein grab.⁷

(Just as love gave us one light, one air gave us life, and as one fire inflamed us both and lit our way, one water wetted and drowned us, and now one grave covers us with one earth).

The piece has the four elements, and also plays (with alliteration) on the idea of love and light (linking with fire); but its choice of words (*erdrenckend*, *befeuchtet*) is not impressive, nor is it as concise as Donne's. Donne was also imitated by a later poet, Daniel Georg Morhof (1639–91)⁸ in a six-line 'Grabschrift

5 The first strophe of Canto 11 (which is dated November 1813) is vv. 482–501. Byron refers in a note to *Heroides* xix and to Musaios: *The Works of Lord Byron: Poetry, vol. III*, ed. Ernest Hartley Coleridge (London: Murray, 1904), p. 178.

6 The Spanish writer Manuel de Salinas y Lizana (1616–88) has an eight-line expansion of Martial, playing on *Sesto* and *Quinto*. Moya del Baño, *El Tema*, p. 295 (see p. 78f.)

7 Georg Rodolf Weckherlin, *Gedichte*, ed. Karl Goedeke (Leipzig: Brockhaus, 1873), p. 307. Online on the website *Die Deutsche Gedichtebibliothek* (gedichte.xbib.de).

8 Daniel Georg Morhof, *Teutsche Gedichte* (Kiel: Reumann, 1682), no. xxvii, pp. 358f. (online). See Gilbert Waterhouse, *The Literary Relations of England and Germany in the Seventeenth Century* (New York: Haskell, 1966 [originally 1914]), p. 124 on Morhof's admiration for Donne.

Auff Leander und Hero', epitaph for Leander and Hero. The presentation is objective, and the first two lines play on two of the elements, air and earth:

Die vorhin ein Geist besessen und die einer Luft genossen/
Liegen hie in einer Erden und in einer Grufft beschlossen.

(Those who once were possessed by a single spirit and breathed one air,
lie here in one earth, enclosed in one grave).

The other elements come in the final four lines, together with a summary, so that the whole reads like a commentary — what in Spanish would be called a *glosa* — on Donne's tighter epigram:

Hero und Leander Leiber liegen hie hinein gesencket.
Eine Flamme hat sie verbrant und eine Fluth hat sie ertränket
Liebe theilet alles/ auch die Elementen sind gemein.
Ey so laß mir dieses eine Elementsche Liebe sein.

(Hero's and Leander's bodies lie buried here, one flame burned them and one flood drowned them. Love shares all things, even the elements. Well, so let me take this as an elemental love).

A further epigram, not this time echoing Donne, is that by the aristocrat Christian Hoffmann von Hoffmanswaldau (1616–1679), who produced a collection of *Poetische Grabschriften*, poetic epitaphs. In the anonymously published volume of one hundred of these, the tenth is cast in Leander's voice. The key themes are light and fire, and the extinguishing of the fire by water is underlined with a final internal rhyme:

Die Liebe war mein Licht bey schwartz geferbter Nacht/
Das Feuer ich trug bestrit der Wellen macht/
Ich fiel in Nereus Reich/ es ist mier nicht gelungen/
Es hat die grosse Fluth die grosse Gluth bezwungen.⁹

9 *Hundert Grab-Schriften* (1662), p. 15 ('Leanders'). The text was published anonymously and without place or publisher (it has been digitised for the *Deutsches Textarchiv*). Again the contemporary spelling, capitalisation and punctuation has been followed. The texts date from the 1640s.

(Love was my light in the dark night, the fire in me was set against the power of the waves, I fell in the realms of Nereus, I could not succeed, the great flood overcame the great burning).

The tradition of epigrams in German continued for some time. Friedrich Haug (1761–1829), the son of one of Schiller's schoolteachers, offers a slightly expanded version of Martial in his 'Leander':

Leander, Hero's Lieber
 Schwamm zum erkohr'nen Turme,
 Und rief dem wilden Sturme,
 "O schone nur hinüber!
 "Verschlinge dann herüber!"

(Leander, Hero's lover, swam to the desired tower and called out to the wild storm "O just preserve me on the way; swallow me up on the return").¹⁰

At the very end of the eighteenth century the poetic translation of Musaios by Friedrich Wilhelm Geucke with the title (in some of the printed versions) *Der nächtliche Schwimmer*, the nocturnal swimmer, included a poem ("by the German translator") on the death of Hero and Leander. 'Auf Hero's und Leander's Tod', in two five-line strophes, is like an epigram in tone. The first part calls upon the Hellespont to mourn for the pair with the strains of the *Trauerharfe*, the harp of sorrow. The second part, in which the Europe/Asia balance is afforded considerable importance and magnifies the relationship, addresses Hero and Leander themselves, too young to die, but now like bright stars:

Herrlich strahlet ihr vor allen
 Du Achaia's Licht, O Mädchen!
 Jüngling, du des Aufgangs Licht!

(Gloriously you shine out above all others, you, o maiden, the light of Greece, you, o youth, that of the orient).

It is of incidental interest that a further German six-line lament for their death, 'Klagelied auf Hero's und Leander's Tod', also by Geucke, was published in his *Gedichte und Epigramme*. This is a squib, not a parody of the theme, but

10 Friedrich Haug, *Epigramme und vermischte Gedichte* (Vienna and Prague: Franz Haas, 1807), I, 154.

rather a comment on the scholarly tradition. Hero and Leander, it complains, have been drowned twice, once in the bosom of Thetis, then “Das zweite mal in Schraders Notenfluth” (for the second time in Schrader’s flood of notes). Johannes Schrader (1722–83) published in 1776 a *Liber Emendationum* of voluminous notes and conjectures on Musaios.¹¹

A better-known and slightly later poet, Ludwig Uhland (1787–1862), has an epigram with the title ‘Hero und Leander’ which can be dated to 1810, but which was published posthumously; it contrasts Leander’s daring with Hero’s anxiety, the active and the passive aspects:

Furchtlos wiegt er den Leib auf des Meeres flutenden Rücken,
Steht sie, die Schwankende still, schwankt doch ihr sorgendes Herz

(Fearlessly he balances his body on the sea’s flowing back. She stands quietly, the trembling one, but her fearful heart *does* tremble).¹²

A final German epigram has had an interesting literary afterlife. In his *Gedichte im Geiste der Anthologie* (poems in the spirit of the [Greek] Anthology), written between 1812 and 1818, August von Platen (-Hallermünde, 1796–1835) included a six-liner with the title ‘Hero und Sappho’ bringing together in balanced and roughly elegiac couplets Hero, who drowned herself because Leander had died, and Sappho, of whom the story is told that she drowned herself because of her unrequited love for Phaon (as in the last of the single *Heroides*). The link between the two pairs of lovers is made elsewhere. Hero, *die geliebte*, the loved, and Sappho, *die liebende*, the loving, both chose death in the water. The poem then implores Eros (*grausamer Gott*, cruel god) to conduct them both into the realms of Persephone, since they both sacrificed themselves to him:

Doch an Leanders Busen geleite die sestische Jungfrau,
Aber zum lethischen Strom führe die Lesbierin.

(Do take the young woman of Sestos to Leander’s breast, but lead the woman of Lesbos to the waters of Lethe).

11 The poem is in *Der nächtliche Schwimmer*, p. 99, the squib in Friedrich Wilhelm Geucke, *Gedichte und Epigramme* (Leipzig: Hertel, 1795), p. 83, referring to Johannes Schrader, *Liber Emendationum* (Leeuwarden: Chalmot, 1776). Schrader’s material was reprinted in a later Musaios-edition.

12 Ludwig Uhland, *Gedichte*, ed. Erich Schmidt and Julius von Hartmann (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1898), I, 413 (“aus dem Nachlaß”). It is dated January 1810. The rendering of *schwanken*, ‘waver, sway’ is difficult.

Hero's love is to continue in the underworld, but Sappho, whose love was unfulfilled, is to be allowed to forget. Platen's epigram was adapted with acknowledgement by the Nobel laureate Giosuè Carducci (1835–1907) as one of his *Odi barbare*, barbarian odes (1877–89), which also experimented with classical metres in a modern vernacular. His version is very close, although in the last portion Sappho becomes intensified as *la deserta di Lesbo*, the deserted woman from Lesbos, although the poem now has the title 'Ero e Leandro'. Carducci, in his turn, was much translated. The French version by Hector Lacoche, for example, moves away from the classical model and makes three rhymed quatrains of the poem (again 'Héro et Léandre'), which does bring about some adjustment, contrasting *Héro ... aimée* with *Sappho ... abandonnée* already at the start, and having Sappho at the end "délaissée et si tendre," abandoned and so tender.¹³

2 Leander Drowned

Probably the most frequent focus in the lyric is on the death of Leander, the act of dying for love. This is true especially in the Spanish baroque period, often with emphasis on the Martial epigram, within which he does not, however, explicitly die.

2.1 *Garcilaso de la Vega and the Iberian Sonnet Tradition*

Much literary interest was aroused by the sonnet by Garcilaso de la Vega (1501–36) beginning "Pasando el mar Leandro el animoso" (Bold Leander, crossing the sea, sonnet xxix), which stood at the head of his friend Boscán's extensive adaptation of Musaios when it was published in 1543 by the latter's widow. Garcilaso has been seen as "the first successfully to acclimatise the new [poetic] measures to the Peninsula",¹⁴ and his Petrarchan sonnet has been studied in detail both in its own right, and also as standing at the head of a

13 August von Platen, *Gesammelte Werke* (Stuttgart: Cotta, 1877), I, 135. The single-volume 1839 edition (online) has the poem on p. 50. *Jungfrau* does indeed mean 'virgin', and both other versions have it, but it can also mean 'young woman'. There is an online version of Carducci's *Odi barbare* edited by Luigi Banfi (Milan, 1986) for the *Biblioteca della Letteratura Italiana* (p. 111f.). Carducci's adaptation of classical metres has been much discussed. The French translation of his *Odes Barbares* is by Hector Lacoche (Rennes: Simon, 1894), p. 225f.; 'tendre' is a rhyme for 'Léandre'. Carducci's odes were done into English by William Fletcher Smith, *The Barbarian Odes* (Menasha, WI: Banta, 1939), see p. 49.

14 J. M. Cohen, *The Baroque Lyric* (London: Hutchinson, 1963), p. 34. Boscán had a similar role for the epic.

tradition of sonnets in Spanish and Portuguese which also use Martial's epigram.¹⁵ Other writings also allude to Garcilaso's sonnet, including the play by Amescua. It was copied, printed in various forms, and is sometimes found attributed to other writers, given that the recording and publication of poetry in the Spanish Golden Age was sometimes erratic. Two Spanish sonnets concerned with Hero seem to be deliberate counterparts as well. As Antonio Alatorre and Jane Whetnall have pointed out in their important discussions of the work, it was even adapted in a *lo divino* form by Juan Timoneda (1518/20–1583) with reference to Adam and Eve, and by Juan de Ávila (1500–1569), with Christ in the central position.

Garcilaso's sonnet opens with Leander, resolute and completely consumed by the fire of love ("en amoroso fuego todo ardiendo") as he sets out, but the wind rises, and he faces a furious tempest.¹⁶ Already by the opening of the second quatrain, Leander is doomed — *vencido*, defeated — but he is conscious less of his own life than the good that he will lose. The sestet gives his last words, using the Martial epigram. Leander's voice is weary (*cansada*) as he addresses the waves, although his voice cannot be heard:

Ondas pues no os escusa que yo muera,
dejadme allá llegar, y a la tornada,
vuestro furor executá en mi vida.

(Waves, since you will not spare me from death, permit me to get there,
and on the return bring your fury to bear upon my life).

15 See on the work itself E. C. Graf, "Forcing the Poetic Voice: Garcilaso de la Vega's Sonnet xxix as a Deconstruction of the Idea of Harmony", *Modern Language Notes* 109 (1994), 163–85. On the responses to Garcilaso's poem see Antonio Alatorre, "Sobre la 'Gran Fortuna' de un Soneto de Garcilaso", *Nueva Revista de Filología Hispánica* 24 (1975), 142–77 and Jane Whetnall, "Hipólita de Narváez and the Leander Sonnet Tradition," *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 86 (2009), 893–909 (both online, with texts). Whetnall makes the significant distinction between despairing pathos and defiance in the reception of Martial. Most of the relevant sonnets are in Moya del Baño, *El Tema*, but Whetnall also includes that by Camões and refers to others. J. P. Sullivan, *Martial. The Unexpected Classic* (Cambridge: CUP, 1991), p. 274f. lists Spanish Golden Age texts which use the theme of Hero and Leander, though not all cite Martial.

16 *Las Obras de Boscán y algunas de Garcilaso de la Vega repartidas in quatro libros* appeared in many editions after 1543 and many have been digitised; it is in the edition published in Antwerp: Nucio, 1569, p. 131v. It is also in Moya del Baño, *El Tema*, p. 215 (cited). The spelling varies (*passando*, *exadme*), as in other earlier Spanish pieces.

The whole sonnet rests upon Martial. Leander is *audax, animoso* at the start, and the address of the drowning man is not to the gods, but to the waves: “sic miser instantes adfatus dicitur undas”. Garcilaso’s poem rests upon the pathos of the known story: Leander knows that he is doomed, and the audience is aware that Leander is going to perish. Garcilaso locates the plea in Leander’s final journey to Hero, so that that he will not, in fact, be spared until his return.

2.2 *Expansions of Garcilaso’s Sonnet*

Antonio Alatorre noted several sixteenth-century *glosas*, developments or commentaries on the sonnet.¹⁷ These vary in size and format, but are related to the original form. One in the *cartapacio* of Pedro de Limos is in fourteen eight-line stanzas, another in the *cancioneiro* of Cristóvão Borges has seven eight-line stanzas. There is an anonymous text in a manuscript from Toledo, another in a New World *Flores de baria poesía* manuscript, and further examples by Francisco Morán de la Estrella (fl. late 16th century) and Francisco de Aldana (1537/40–1578). Two of the many noted by Alatorre may serve as examples. Pedro de Padilla (ca 1540– after 1599), from Linares in Andalucía, and latterly a Carmelite friar, published in 1580 a *Thesoro de Varias Poesias* (with another edition in 1587), which contains a number of poems marked *ageno* (*ajeno*), meaning ‘by somebody else’, these including Garcilaso’s sonnet (which is occasionally referred to, or presented as if it were by Padilla), followed by three linked pieces. The first, headed *Glosa propia*, ‘my own commentary’, is once more in the sonnet-determined form of fourteen ottava-rima stanzas, each stanza ending with a line of Garcilaso’s poem and developing the ideas leading up to it. This piece is followed by one in another literary form, a continuation of the tale itself in romancero style (*Romance prosiguiendo la historia*, 40 lines), showing Hero’s wait for Leander (“En la gran torre de Sexto/ Ero mal penada estava ...” Hero was in much distress in the great tower in Sestos ...), and finally by third continuation in another set form as *Estancias prosiguiendo* (six ottava-rima stanzas) on the death of Hero, ending: “Mi vida fuyste tu, yo no la tengo” (My life was you; I will have it no more).¹⁸ Padilla’s contemporary, Antonio de Lo Frasso (1540–1600) also included a *Glosa* on the poem in his extensive *Los*

17 “Sobre la ‘Gran Fortuna’”, p. 163f. He expands this in his *Cuatro Ensayos Sobre Arte Poética* (Mexico: El Colegio de Mexico, 2007), p. 468. Full bibliographical references are given in both cases. Some texts are available in print or online, others only in manuscript.

18 *Thesoro de Varias Poesias, Compuesto por Pedro de Padilla* (Madrid: Francisco Sanchez, 1580). The edition published by Querino Gevado in Madrid in 1587 is online and is cited here. The texts are on 463v–467v, beginning with the sonnet and the *glosa*; the romance begins on 465v and the *estancias* on 466v. There is a modern edition of the *Thesoro* by José J. Labrador Herraiz and Ralph A. DiFranco ([Guadalajara,] Mexico: Frente de Afirmación

diez libros de la fortuna de amor, a text of which was published in Barcelona in 1573, and — curiously — in London in 1740. We have again fourteen ottava rima stanzas, each ending with a successive line of the sonnet, intensifying the cruelty of the fate which kills Leander.¹⁹

2.3 Further Sonnets

Several Golden Age sonnets in Spanish and Portuguese echo Garcilaso and Martial, although not always in the same way. Juan de Coloma (ca 1522–1586) contrasts the fear of icy death (*muerte helado*) with the fire of love, and again ends with the plea from Martial, given by Leander's tired voice. In the sonnet by Gutierre de Cetina (ca 1520–ca 1557) too, Leander is burning with the fire of love as he gazes towards Hero's tower, but the last lines are the plea to the waves once again. This is extended in the sonnet by Pedro Soto de Rojas (ca 1584–1658), where the entire sestet is taken up with the request that, even if his death is decreed, he wishes for a stay of execution until after he has seen his love. Juan (de) Valdés (Valdéz) y Meléndez (ca 1490–1541) has Leander deliver the despairing plea in the *first* part of the sonnet, his words carried off by the wind as he loses hope. Juan de Arguijo (1567–1623) also has Leander addressing the waves as he dies, although the small light and his great love spur him on. We may add in this group, though it involves moving away from a chronological arrangement, a rather later example by the neoclassical poet and dramatist (who in fact named a son Leandro), Nicolás Fernández de Moratín (1737–1780), whose sonnet again devotes the sestet to the familiar plea. In a sad voice *el joven desdichado* (the unhappy young man, Martial's *miser*), makes the declaration, aware that he is going to die: "Viéndose de la muerte amenazado" (seeing death threaten), he asks to be spared while he is on his way, and drowned when he is tired on his return.²⁰

Hispanista, 2008) with a valuable introduction (and a preface by Aurelio Valladares). See pp. 22–3 (and n.12) on Garcilaso and on Padilla's homage to the poet.

19 Antonio de Lo Frasso, *Diez libros de Fortuna de amor* (Barcelona: Pedro Malo, [1573]), with a further printing produced by Pedro Pineda (London: Henry Chapel, 1740). The Barcelona text is edited (with the text on pp. 104–9 and with interesting references to the London edition) at: filologiasarda.eu/files/documenti/pubblicazioni_pdf/cfslofrasso/03edizione.pdf.

20 Juan de Coloma (there were other members of this family with the same name) is in Moya del Baño, *El Tema*, p. 219; Gutierre de Cetina is on p. 216. The sonnet 'Leandro' by Pedro Soto de Rojas is in his *Desengaño de Amor en rimas* (Madrid: Alonso Martin, 1623), p. 90v (online). Juan Valdés y Meléndez (Moya del Baño, p. 225) and Juan de Arguijo are in Whettnall, "Hipólita", p. 899 and 901. Fernández de Moratín is in Moya del Baño, p. 303 (and see p. 77). Coloma, Cetina, Valdés, and Fernández de Moratín are in Krummrich.

Jane Whetnall makes the point that the sonnets by Francisco de Sá(a) de Miranda in Castilian and that by Camões in Portuguese distance themselves from the pathos expressed by Garcilaso and others by angling Leander's response differently. Francisco de Sá de Miranda (1481–1556), a Portuguese from Coimbra who wrote in Castilian, has Leander entirely resigned almost from the outset, and he can therefore be defiant at the last. Shown at the start as fighting with the waves without any rest ("luchando con las ondas sin sosiego") Leander sees that it is all in vain ("Viendo que es todo vano"). Although he swims resolutely on towards the light in the high tower, he is quite clear as to the outcome. "En fin, ondas, vencéis", he declares — "waves, you have won the battle." His last words, and the final line of the sonnet, is not a plea that he might be spared for the return, but an awareness of his own fate, expressed in what might be called resigned defiance: "¿Vivo no queréis vos? ¡pues iré muerto!" "don't you want to live? I'm going to die".²¹

Luís Vaz de Camões (ca 1524–1580) has his Leander, struggling in the waves, address them in his thoughts, and a different wish forms the content of the sestet. He too knows that he will die, but he does not make any request to be spared:

Já te não peço a vida; só queria
que a de Hero me salves; não me veja ...

(I do not ask for life, I only ask that you take care of Hero; do not let her see me).

He commits his dead body to the waves, claiming that they are envious of what he has, the love that is greater than death.²²

Other Portuguese poets of the period offered sonnets on the theme, sometimes using Martial. Diogo Bernardes (ca 1530–ca 1605) has a sonnet showing Leander tackling the waves and wind of the Hellespont at night, and in the final part of the sestet extending his plea by addressing the waves, the wind and

21 The text is in Moya del Baño, *El Tema*, p. 217 and in Whetnall, "Hipólita", p. 895f., who discusses it (and that by Camões) in detail and indicates textual variations. She also notes Ovidian references, and points to its influence upon the sonnet by Hipólita. It is translated in Krummrich.

22 The text is in Luís de Camões, *Rimas*, ed. Alvaro J. da Costa Pimpão (Coimbra: University Press, 1953), p. 163 (this and other editions online). The poem is in Krummrich, and in *The Collected Lyric Poems of Luís de Camões*, trans. Landeg White (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton UP, 2008), p. 163. See Alatorre, "Sobre la 'Gran Fortuna'", p. 173 and Whetnall, "Hipólita", p. 908.

the sea: “Não m’afogueis vos rogo, em quanto vou/ Afogayme depois quando tornar” (I beg you, do not drown me while I am going, drown me later when I return).²³ Manuel de Faria e Sousa (1590–1649), who edited and commented upon the work of Camões, does not, however, use Martial in his own rather difficult sonnet on “the notoriety of Leander and Hero” in which, as Barry Taylor has made clear, Leander becomes a ship as he crosses the Hellespont, and both the ship of love and Leander himself perish.²⁴

In further Spanish sonnets on Leander’s death, Félix Lope de Vega y Carpio (1592–1635) plays, like others, with the notion of fire and water, the greater element defeating the fire of love, but not quenching the thirst of the soul, and there is a similar motif in the elegant sonnet ‘A Leandro’ by José García de Salcedo Coronel (1592–1651), in which Leander, *en mortal desassosiego*, in mortal distress, nevertheless defies the gods of the sea (rather than the waves) by declaring that it is their vengeance which is in vain, since the entire sea counts for little against the fire that is in him. Leander’s attitude in this sonnet is defiant, but in another, by Quevedo, the tone is one of despair, as Leander can neither turn back nor swim on, and dare not even weep, as tears will increase the sea and the storm.²⁵ Jorge de Montemayor (or Montemor, ca 1520–61), another Portuguese writing in Castilian, has a more general sonnet in which Leander is again inflamed by love, his mind filled with a single thought; but that love leads to a terrible death.²⁶

23 Diogo Bernardes, *Rimas Varias Flores de Lima* (Lisbon: Manoel de Lyra, 1596), p. 52v (sonnet 87) (online). Manuel Quintano de Vasconcel(l)os (ca 1575–1655) is noted as having written a sonnet on the death of Leander, and there are doubtless more, both in Castilian and Portuguese, as a detailed inspection of contemporary *cancioneros* might demonstrate.

24 Barry Taylor, “The Mythological Sonnets of Manuel de Faria e Sousa”, at: <https://ecitydoc.com/download/the-mythological-sonnets-of-manuel-de-faria-e-sousa-/barry-taylor.pdf>. The sonnet, which Taylor takes from a text of 1646, is on p. 8, with a commentary on p. 9. He notes that Hero is barely mentioned, and that (though he offers a possibility) the reference to envy and the *quarto Cume* is opaque. If not a misreading (for *lume*, as suggested, though the interpretation is again abstruse), is this a reference to the Cumaean Sibyl, who lives forever without being able to die in Ovid’s *Metamorphoses* xiv, 132? Moya del Baño notes, *El Tema*, p. 79, that he translated Martial.

25 Lope is in Moya del Baño, *El Tema*, p. 226. Quevedo (sonnet CCA, *Canta sola a Lisí*) is on p. 279. See p. 75f. of her study for comments on Quevedo’s classical allusions and on the power of his final tercet. Both are translated in Krummrich. Salcedo Coronel’s sonnet (xvii) is in *Rimas varias de Don Garcia Salcedo Coronel* (Madrid: npub., 1627), p. 12r: the copy in the Austrian National Library is digitised (Google Books).

26 *Cancionero de ... George de Monte Mayor* (Alcala de Henares: Juan Gracián, 1572), p. 100v (online).

2.4 *Beyond Spain*

The influence of Garcilaso's piece was not restricted to the Iberian peninsula. The three six-line strophes of 'Leander Drowned' by Philip Ayres (1638–1712) also show Leander's final struggle against the waves, when, nearly overcome, he can only think of Hero. He speaks against fate "with feeble voice", and (in the final strophe) begs the winds and seas in another despairing version of Martial: "And at return let me your Victim dy".²⁷ Moving away from the extensive Spanish tradition, however, the death of Leander is the focal point of poems by well-known English-language poets over a considerable period, from Herrick in the seventeenth century to Keats and to the Irish writer Thomas Moore, then more recently to A. E. Housman. They demonstrate shifting attitudes to the story.

Robert Herrick (1591–1674) presents an unusual angle in 'Leander's Obsequies', twelve rhymed tetrameters which first appeared in his *Hesperides* in 1648, and which were later set to music by Henry Lawes.²⁸ As the title implies, Leander is dead ("When as Leander young was drown'd"), but the response comes not from Hero, but from Love himself, who sits on a rock and weeps, with the words: "Ah, cruell sea!" and looking on't/ Wept as he'd drowne the Hellespont." The final couplet, however, is weak; he would have said more "but that his teares forbad the rest." The lyric is distanced from the details of the story, apart from Leander's death in the Hellespont, and if the approach is novel, the overall effect is nevertheless slight, with all the blame on the sea.

The sonnet by John Keats (1795–1821) was written in March 1817 but not published until after his death; 'On a Picture of Leander' is also sometimes given the title 'On an Engraved Gem of Leander' or 'On a Leander Which Miss Reynolds, My Kind Friend, Gave Me'.²⁹ It appeared in *The Gem* in 1829, and in the same issue is an engraving (based on a painting) of Leander and Hero embracing, as well as a little comic poem by Thomas Hood, which puns on

27 Philip Ayres, *Lyric Poems* (London: Knight and Saunders, 1687), p. 138. See Alatorre, "Sobre la 'Gran Fortuna'", p.160, n. 32 and Mario Praz, "Stanley, Sherburne and Ayres as Translators and Imitators of Italian, Spanish and French Poets", *Modern Language Review* 20 (1925), 419–31, esp. p. 429, on the links with Garcilaso.

28 Cited from the two-volume reprint of *Hesperides* (London: Pickering, 1846), I, 51f. See also *The Works of Robert Herrick*, ed. A. Pollard (London: Lawrence and Bullen, 1891), I, 50 (online). There are detailed notes on the music and the text in the new edition of *The Complete Poetry of Robert Herrick*, ed. Tom Cain and Ruth Connolly (Oxford: OUP, 2013), II, 482–4. Henry Lawes (1596–1662), a composer praised by Milton, set many of the poems to music.

29 Keats's poem is readily available in collected editions, anthologies, and in many places online. It is here cited from the World's Classics edition of *The Poetical Works of John Keats* (London: Grant Richards, 1901), p. 64.

'Greece' and 'dripping', and is probably a direct parody of Keats's sonnet, and which uses the word 'dip' in a different sense.

What is immediately striking is the distanced point of view. Like Martial's piece, Keats's sonnet is based on another work of art that already references the story, a memorial gem engraved by William Tassie with Leander drowning. Keats addresses the poem to "sweet maidens", who are invited to come and see (though they cannot be unmoved by) "a victim of your beauty bright ... Sinking bewilder'd 'mid the dreary sea", and this intended audience echoes Byron, assuring us in his slightly earlier poem about swimming the Hellespont that young maids are bound to remember the story. Keats's implication that Leander is the victim of the beauty of a sweet maiden is ambivalent, as are the abrupt and rather too specific final lines. Leander drowns thinking of Hero, but Keats makes his ending blunt:

O horrid dream! see how his body dips
Dead-heavy; arms and shoulders gleam awhile:
He's gone; up bubbles all his amorous breath!

The Irish poet Thomas Moore (1779–1852) produced in 1828 a more conventional presentation of Leander's death in his 'Hero and Leander'.³⁰ Although designated a ballad, and using some direct speech, it offers only the one scene. The first of the three six-line strophes is placed in Leander's mouth as he contemplates his nocturnal crossing. The night is dark, the wind moaning, and there is "No star over Helle's sea"; but there is still the one "love-kindled star" which is to lead him to Hero. The second strophe is initially objective: with these words, we are told, he plunges into the sea, with his eye fixed on the tiny light. The final two lines are in his voice again, however, and are prophetically ominous (we are not shown Hero's suicide), and ironic in the use of the word 'rest': "Tonight ... living or dead,/ Sweet Hero, I'll rest with thee". In the last strophe the poetic voice questions where Love is at the hour of her votary's need, Leander struggles and sinks, and the last line, in his voice once more, is: "Sweet Hero, I die for thee".

A more recent (and more impressive) poem, finally, is the brief 'Tarry, delight, so seldom met' of Alfred Edward Housman (1859–1936), which appeared as poem xv in *More Poems*, collected from his notebooks in 1936.³¹ As with

30 *The Poetical Works of Thomas Moore* (London: Longman, 1841), v, 94. The poem is one of his "Legendary Ballads", first published in 1830.

31 *The Collected Poems of A. E. Housman* (London: Cape, 1939, new ed. 1971), p. 119. Housman was, of course, a celebrated classicist. The general comments on his writing derive from

many of his works it reflects in succinct form the transitoriness and impermanence of relationships, combined with what has been described as a characteristically stoical and defiant response. The link with the story is not apparent until the second of the three short quatrains. The first asks that pleasure might stay a while, though it is “sure to perish”, and soon it must and will cease. The second introduces the constants of the story, and we are “By Sestos town, in Hero’s tower,” and Leander lies on her heart. However, the torch — the other familiar element — “has burned its hour/ And sputters as it dies”. The final quatrain does not present Leander’s death as such, but there is despair in the fact that he has to swim again “Between two continents”, with the sense that this, now that the torch has died, will be the last time. The condensing of the recognised story takes us back to the original minimum of constants (Hero, Leander, Hellespont, torch), whilst retaining its power to move.

3 Hero’s Lament and Death

Hero’s emotions on finding the corpse of Leander are an equally obvious focal point, even if some of the epic presentations afford Hero too much scope for extended threnody. The author of the eight-line lyric in the early madrigal, ‘Weep, weep mine eyes’, is unclear; it was published in 1609 for five-part singing with the music by John Wilbye (1574–1638).³² Hero reacts to her lover’s death with sorrow and says that she does not fear to follow him. She herself then declares what is regularly expressed by the narrative voice, that they will meet “in Elysian plain” and there find joy again. Having her express this before death, hence as a hope, is not quite the same as having it presented as a statement of fact.

Padilla’s *romancero* continuations from Garcilaso’s sonnet place Hero in the foreground, and other Spanish sonnets, sometimes influenced by Garcilaso, also focus upon Hero. The first is the anonymous poem ‘Hero de la alta torre do miraba’ (Hero, from the high tower where she looked down), in which Hero sees the body of Leander (in the quatrains), and in the sestet begs her husband and friend (*esposo, amigo*) to wait for her, not to leave, because she too will die: “espérame, no partas, que ya muero”. Death has struck two with one blow. Another sonnet with a very similar first line by Hernando de Acuña (ca 1520–1580) has her see the dead Leander tossed by the waves and the wind.

Peter Parker’s biography *Housman Country* (London: Little, Brown, 2017; Abacus, 2017), p. 104.

32 Wilbye is one of the best-known writers of madrigals, and this is a familiar one, readily accessible online as text, music, and in performances.

This sonnet places the final two lines in Hero's mouth as she declares that she can hope for no more good, but at least she will be with him.³³ The sonnet "Ya rendido Leandro agua bebía" (Leander, defeated, drinks the water) by the much-titled Diego de Silva y Mendoza, Conde de Salinas, Marqués de Alenquer (1564–1630) treats the death of Leander in the first part, with the drinking-conceit from Musaios, and also the familiar contrast of the fire of love with the water of the Hellespont, but the sestet turns to Hero and the sonnet ends with her declaration of death, for her life had left her after the death of Leander.³⁴

A Spanish sonnet which summarises the catastrophe is the nicely-balanced but oddly dispassionate 'A Leandro y Ero' of Francisco López de Zárate (1580–1658). The sun hides the violence of the sea dividing the lovers, and Leander sets out like a ship — a classical motif — but the sestet has the tragedy. Neptune, envious of the lovers, gives Leander to a sea-goddess (*la marina diosa*), who takes him, and Hero, "per oponerse a sus favores" in opposition to his favours, throws herself into the sea to die for love. The sonnet ends: "el Dios la recibió dándola abrazos" (the god received her with open arms).³⁵ The active role of the sea-goddess in taking Leander (and even Neptune's action in giving him to her) has presumably coincidental echoes in later ballads by Hood and Brookes More, and indeed in parodies.

4 Hero's Lamp; Dante Gabriel Rossetti

The most prominent incidental element in the narrative is Hero's lamp, set up to guide Leander across the Hellespont, and a symbol too of the light or fire of love or life, and sometimes outshining the stars. And it is of course extinguished.

33 The anonymous sonnet (which also attracted a *glosa* like that of Garcilaso) is in Moya del Baño, *El Tema*, p. 219 and Alatorre, "Sobre la 'Gran Fortuna'", p. 156f. This *soneto viejo* was printed in 1557 in a *Cancionero general* (Antwerp: Martin Nucio, 1557), pp. cccc verso–ccccc recto. It is followed (ccccc r–v) by a *Glosa nueva al soneto de arriba* (new commentary on the foregoing sonnet) in seven eight-line stanzas, the final two lines of each are the lines of the poem in order. These extend and develop the material of the sonnet. Hernando de Acuña's poem is in Moya del Baño, p. 222 and see Alatorre, p. 159 on the connexion. Both are translated in Krummrich.

34 There is a text in Trevor Dadson, *Conde de Salinas. Obras Completas. I. Poesía desconocida* (Madrid: Real Academia, 2016), p. 49; also in the *Antología de la poesía cósmica y tanática de Diego de Silva y Mendoza*, ed. Fredo Arias de la Canal (Mexico: Frente de Afirmación Hispanista, 2003), p. 14. There is a translation in Krummrich. See Claude Gaillard, "Un Inventaria de las poesías atribuidas al Conde de Salinas", *Criticon* 41 (1988), 5–66, p. 64 on this sonnet (also online). Gaillard notes p. 29 some further strophes on Leander attributed to Góngora.

35 Moya del Baño, p. 247. Translated in Krummrich.

Lyric poems can use it as a personalised image — Louise Ackermann does so in French — but one of the most interesting and most difficult lyric poems is that by Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828–82), composed probably in 1875. ‘Hero’s Lamp’ is sonnet 88 in the revised “House of Life” sequence in the *Ballads and Sonnets* of 1881.³⁶

The first quatrain begins during the last night of the story and anticipates its end: Hero fills the lamp *tonight* in the name of Eros, and *tomorrow* it shall be fireless, after which it will be dedicated “for drowned Leander’s sake” by the Sestians to Anteros, the brother of Eros and the god of *requited* love. The second quatrain has the dawn breaking on the fading storm and the double death, and the lovers (perhaps) by the Avernian Lake, where Love itself is a mere neophyte of Death. The sestet returns to the lamp, which will stand unlit until any one man experiences “the happy issue ... Of a life’s love”; and it still may (Rossetti originally wrote “must”) “rest unfir’d” and will continue to do so: “for mine and thine,/ O brother, what brought love to thee or me?”

The poem is about Hero and Leander, and their death; however, it seems that the one object that remains after the story, the lamp itself, will never be lit again. The cruel or capricious god Eros goes on, but his brother remains unworshipped. Rossetti, according to his own note, took this variation on the after-tale from Burton’s *Anatomy of Melancholy*, where the lamp remains unlit, “which I can refer,” added Burton, “to nought but the inconstancy and lightness of women.” The sonnet, too, seems to imply general disillusion, and the ending is notably ambiguous.³⁷ The love of Hero and Leander was requited, even if doomed, so that perhaps they were the last constant lovers, and the death of Hero marks the division between Eros and Anteros, with the latter no longer celebrated.

36 Text in: *The Pre-Raphaelites and their Circle*, ed. Cecil Lang (Chicago and London: U. Chicago P, 2nd ed. 1975), p. 123. The hypermedia Rossetti archive has a transcript with Rossetti’s corrections at: rossettiarchive.org/docs/1-1875.sa88.texms.rad.html. The archive lists the different manuscripts (6), proofs (11) and early editions of the poem (5). Rossetti’s changes and his various notes are made clear. A poem called “Die Fackel der Hero” by Carl (Karl) Gotthold Lenz (1763–1809) appeared in the *Göttinger Musenalmanach* for 1790, p. 194, but I have been unable to locate a copy. There is a further poem with that title noted in MS amongst the paper of Johannes Gottfried Herder (1744–1803).

37 The comments in *The Anatomy of Melancholy* (1621–51) are in partition III, section 2, subsection 3: there are many editions, some also online (as Philadelphia: Claxton, 1883, p. 540). On the poem see Felix Forster, *Dante Gabriel Rossetti und der romantische Desillusionismus* (Göttingen: V&R Unipress, 2014), p. 98f.

5 The Dramatic Lyric

Different possible approaches in the lyric include a deliberately dramatic presentation, and an introspective and personalised reception of the story. We hear the separate voices of Leander and Hero already in Ovid, and this is reflected in his imitators. One example of this, which is admittedly rather long to be classed as a lyric, is provided by the French poet (and sometime musketeer) Claude-Joseph Dorat (1734–1780), published separately as *Héro a Léandre. Héroïde Nouvelle* in 1759. Hero has not seen him for three days and her desperation to see him gradually overcomes her: “Léandre ... je ne puis ... tous mes efforts sont vains .../ Je me meurs ... et la plume échappe de mes mains” (Leander ... I cannot go on ... all my efforts are useless ... I am dying..and the pen is dropping from my hand).³⁸

The voices of Leander and of Hero may be heard clearly enough within the lyric in general. Hero speaks movingly in the sestet of the anonymous Spanish sonnet “Hero de la alta torre do miraba” and Leander does so in Thomas Moore’s poem, although the most notable illustration of direct comment by Leander is his unheard address to the waves in Martial. Leander’s role as the active partner focuses interest upon what he *does*, and his emotions are at their highest when he is in his final struggles, but Hero offers far more scope for dramatic presentation, expressing anxiety about Leander’s absence, longing, reluctance to part (the woman’s pleading is part of the tradition of the dawn-song), or fear for his safety.

The French poet Pierre Laujon (1727–1811), who also wrote the lyrics for a stage production on the theme for the court of Louis xv, produced at the end of the eighteenth century a dramatic scene between Hero and Leander in the form of a lyric exchange, with a final strophe spoken by them both. His ‘Sérénade donnée sur l’eau’ is set at night and echoes the balcony scene in *Romeo and Juliet* as well as Ovid, as Hero exclaims “Je t’attends, viens, cher Léandre” (I am waiting for you, dear Leander, come) and Leander urges them to seize the moment.³⁹ Two major poets, however, explore the emotions of Hero at different points in the narrative: when Leander is about to leave her (which might always be the last time she would see him); and when she is waiting for him on the night of his death. Both offer the opportunity for dramatic monologue.

38 *Héro a Léandre. Héroïde Nouvelle. Par l’auteur de Julie et de Philomele* [= Claude-Joseph Dorat, Le Chevalier Dorat] (Paris: Léonard Cuissart, 1759), pp. 5–14. Dorat’s poetry, and in particular his *Heroides*-imitations, are more widely praised than his dramas.

39 *Oeuvres choisies de P. Laujon* (Paris: C.-F. Patris, 1811), II, 411–3.

5.1 *Friedrich Hölderlin*

The German Friedrich Hölderlin (1770–1843) dramatized (with what look like stage-directions) the latter situation in one of his early poems, ‘Hero’, probably written in 1788. The piece is in twelve strophes of eight lines, as double quatrains, and in form it is similar not only to the drama but to the ballad, although one scene only is presented.⁴⁰ It is influenced by Ovid, placing motifs from the letter to Leander in Hero’s mind as she waits for him that final time. The poem opens with Hero, awake when all others are asleep, just managing to control her emotions and thanking the gods, ironically, for giving her the courage to do so. Love is what causes her anxiety, not the storm and the waves, but she — *seine Hero*, his Hero — forces herself to be calm. After the first two strophes comes a quasi-stage-direction: “sie kommt ans Meer”, she comes down to the sea, where she is faced with the great waves and the foaming waters. But this time love overcomes her fears, which are nevertheless vigorously imagined: “Liebe besieget die Schrecken, die um mich schweben,/ Schlangengezisch, und Skorpionen, und Löwengebrüll” (Love conquers the fears which hover around me, the hiss of serpents, scorpions and the lion’s roar). The concept of being victorious (*besieget*) will recur. She has, she says, waited for seven nights, and Hölderlin also uses the *Heroides* in developing her anxieties, as the fourth strophe has her worrying whether Leander has found solace with another lover, and then putting the thought aside, wanting Leander to stay where he is. The catastrophe is signalled in the sixth strophe. She hears her own name when Leander (as in various versions) dies with her name on his lips: “Götter! da ruft es ja wieder Hero!” (O gods, there it is again, calling out ‘Hero’).

The second half of the poem is active rather than passive, as the feelings of Hero intensify, and the dramatic elements are underlined. Her first impulse is to want to go out towards him, and then she suddenly sees him. For the moment this provokes delight — her speech is *freudig*, happy, and she is triumphant, using the word *Gesiegt!* — he was victorious. Playfully she wants to hide so that he will come and find her. However, she realises that Leander is simply being borne towards her by the sea, she holds her lamp over his corpse (another stage-direction) and sees his death-smile. Now almost incoherent, she clasps the body, saying of the signs of death that *sie töden mich!*, they are killing me! She recalls that he had thought of her in his hour of death: “Hero! stammelt’

40 Friedrich Hölderlin, *Sämtliche Werke und Briefe*, ed. Franz Zinkernagel (Leipzig: Insel, 1915–22), I (1922), 421–4 (in his *Jugendgedichte*, 1784–1800). The poem is well-known and available online. The original spelling is retained here. See Montgomery Marshall, *Friedrich Hölderlin and the German Neo-Hellenic Movement* (Oxford: OUP, 1923), pp. 80–106 on the theme in general (Part I only).

er noch mit sterbendem Munde" (He still stammered 'Hero!' with his dying voice). This dramatizes and brings together motifs which are physically separate; Leander's last words, calling out her name, are not usually heard by Hero herself. In the final strophe, Hölderlin places into her mouth the motif of the union of the lovers in Elysium, which is often added after the event, stressing the word "eternal". After a significant pause the theme of victory returns as she overcomes in a final struggle with herself any weakness she might have had, to join him in death. The gods are not blamed; rather the last words of Leander are seen as divine, and the gods are asked to give her the strength to die. The disjointed language of her last speech is striking:

Und du hast ihn auf ewig wiedergefunden.
 Ewig umlächelt von hoher Elisiumslust —
Pause
 Ha! ich habe gesiegt! an des Orkus Pforte
 Anzuklopfen — nein, ich bin nicht zu schwach!
 Hero! Hero! rief er, Götterworte!
 Stärkt mich! stärkt durchs Dunkle mich! Ich folge nach.

(And you have found him again for all eternity, eternally smiled upon by the delights of Elysium. *Pause*. Ha! I am victorious! to knock on the gates of Death — no, I am not too weak for that! Hero! Hero! he cried — divine words! Give me the strength! Give me the strength to go through the darkness! I follow).

Hero's almost incoherent last words contrast with the extensive farewell speeches of some earlier versions. Noteworthy, too, is the integration of ideas from the classical letter to Leander when we know he is already dead. Ovid is unspecific, but others have declared that her letter was never received.

5.2 *Alfred, Lord Tennyson*

Alfred, Lord Tennyson (1809–1892) seems, in his shorter and early poem 'Hero to Leander', to be less dramatic than the German poet, although there are good grounds for comparison.⁴¹ The scene is different, however, and Hero is trying to persuade Leander not to leave. Any of these occasions could be the last — this

⁴¹ The poem first appeared in Alfred Tennyson, *Poems, Chiefly Lyrical* (London: Wilson, 1830), so that the poet was probably about the same age as Hölderlin was when he wrote his. There are numerous editions of Tennyson in print and online, as: *The Poetical Works of Alfred, Lord Tennyson* (Troy, NY: Nims, 1886), p. 675.

is one of the truisms of the narrative — and the sense of foreboding underlies her eager pleading, as demands for ever more kisses keep him there until morning. Hero pleads in four irregular rhymed strophes that Leander should not leave yet — “I’ll stay thee with my kisses”, she urges, and the line “Oh go not yet” recurs. Her pleading becomes more intense, and in the last strophe come the notes of tragedy: “And when thou art dead, Leander,/ My soul must follow thee”. And yet Leander must go. Morning is coming and the turret stairs leading to the sea are wet. Hero’s last words match those in Hölderlin’s piece, however, even though we are not so far into the tale; the known tragedy is always present at every point in the retelling:

Leander, go not yet.
The pleasant stars have set.
Oh! go not, go not yet
Or I will follow thee.

This not the suicide scene itself, but the implications are clear, especially with that reference to his death a few lines earlier. She will follow him into death just as he followed her as a goddess. Without that ending and the foreshadowing of death this could be a straightforward *aubade*. We may consider an anonymous seventeenth-century song, which might be about Hero and Leander, but is not: “the day breaks not, it is my heart ... Oh! stay, oh! stay, oh! stay, or else my joys must die ...” The piece serves to indicate just how much is shared with the dawn-song, and one wonders how that earlier work might be received had it borne, like Tennyson’s poem, the heading ‘Hero to Leander’.⁴²

5.3 *Francis Reginald Statham and Madison Cawein*

A third dramatic presentation of Hero — again of her final lament, as in Hölderlin — is that by Francis Reginald Statham (1844–1908), whose life as a journalist and poet (and in its early stages, criminal) is of considerable, but separate interest. He published in 1870 a collection of poems under the name “Francis Reynolds”, which contained one simply called ‘Hero’, a dramatic monologue in thirteen sestinas.⁴³ Unlike many of the rightly forgotten poems on the theme, this one is worthy of rescue, and the opening is arresting. Hero

42 It was composed in around 1612. The text, with a transcription of the music (by Arnold Dolmetsch) is in John Hadfield’s compilation, *A Book of Beauty* (London: Hulton, 1952), p. 74f.

43 Francis Reynolds [i.e. Francis Reginald Statham], *Glaphyra and Other Poems* (London: Longmans, 1870), pp. 145–9 (online).

does not care about the daylight: "For I am old." But she has not reached old age, and this is simply an image; "how long ago/ Was I beloved?" she asks, "and therefore young." Time has ceased to have any meaning for her, and her eyes are dimmed with tears rather than with age. Leander died for her, and although she wonders briefly if fate had made him too confident, she attributes all the blame to herself: "Against thee only I alone have sinned." She herself seems to proclaim the enduring and perhaps unique greatness of their love: "And ask the loveless ages as they flee/ 'Where is that passion which o'ercame the sea?'" But enduring fame is not in her mind. She asks that the wind and waves should not lament, and her last demand is that "love and grief be equally forgot", as she prepares to leap into the "arms that welcome me to sleep". To be sure, she hopes that the sea will take her to "Those calm fields where now Leander waits", but she is only expressing a hope, and there is none of the certainty sometimes established by a narrative voice. With greater reality she imagines her body cast up beside his so that someone will find them "resting side-by-side", and — this is the final line of the poem — "know that death hath made a widow-bride". The Elysian Fields are a hope, but the only sure and certain element is death. The motif of the widow-bride is also found elsewhere. The poetic paradox of her asking for the love to be forgotten is also of interest.

By way of contrast to these dramatizations or realisations of Hero's words and thoughts we may glance finally at a poem by Madison Cawein (1865–1914), who gives us the same situation as Tennyson does, only this time in the voice of Leander.⁴⁴ His poem 'Leander to Hero', published in 1889 in six strophes of varying length (between six and twelve lines) is poetically very far from Hölderlin's fear-torn and breathless Hero, from Statham's once-loved girl suddenly made old, and even from Tennyson's eager and anxious one. Leander is preparing to return to Abydos after "one kiss and then — good night". Love, he declares, will not be his undoing, but will give him strength (a familiar motif), and Hero should not weep, although he does invoke those who will try to drag him, "their weak lover", into "Deep caves, where sirens hover". These perhaps echo Hood's ballad, although the forced rhyme is not the only unfortunate element in the picture of implausibly hovering cave-dwelling sirens (who ought surely to be singing, seated firmly upon rocks?). Leander tells Hero to follow him, not into death, of course, but in her dreams (curiously described as "vestal-vestured"), as this will help him. The final strophe ("One kiss, one kiss! I go!") simply tells her not to grieve when he is gone, although the repeated

44 Madison Cawein, *Accolon of Gaul, with other Poems* (Louisville: Morton, 1889), pp. 113–5. Cawein was extremely prolific but is known now mainly through the link between his work and T. S. Eliot's 'The Waste Land'.

“I go” has the unintended effect of making the reader wish that he would get on with it. Hero, compulsorily lovely, is in this poem little more than a cardboard cut-out, and Leander himself has a more memorable presence in some of the earlier dramatic lyrics, although he is already dead in two of them. Cawein’s poem demonstrates, unfortunately, that Leander embodies action and offers far less dramatic scope in terms of speech.

6 Poetic Introspection: Hipólita de Narváez, Louise Ackermann, Charles Tennyson Turner — and Byron

The intensity of the love invites an ostensibly personal reading. The use of the story as a parallel to the situation of the poetic voice (even leaving aside considerations of the personal heresy) can be implicit in any version, but some lyrics use the narrative particularly clearly in this way. An early instance is the song ‘Shall I come, if I swim?’, which is found in the *Booke of Ayres* published in 1601 by Thomas Campion (1567–1601) and Philip Rosseter (1568–1623). The precise authorship of the text and the music is unclear, but although the words are often ascribed to Campion, the collection names Rosseter as the author of this piece. In ten lines the poetic voice compares his own situation with the love of Hero and Leander in an entirely positive manner. The lover offers to swim to his love, claiming that “Streams Venus will appease; Cupid gives me wings”, which, given the behaviour of the gods (and of those two in particular) in other versions, is remarkably optimistic. But this is not Leander speaking, just someone wishing to emulate him. The beloved is compared to Hero just as she herself was compared to Venus, and Hero even retains her religious role. “You are fair, so was Hero that in Sestos dwelt/ She a priest, yet the heat of love fairly felt.” She offered Leander a guiding light; the focus is upon the successful visits of Leander to Hero, and the outcome is absent. The little song uses the story with full knowledge, but the final tragedy is not acknowledged, making the comparison a little ominous.⁴⁵

In the sixteenth century, the lady Hipólita de Narváez is included amongst the throng of Spanish baroque poets who produced sonnets concerned with

45 The text is no. 12 in the second half of the *Booke of Ayres*, under the pieces ascribed to Rosseter. It is available online, with recordings of the sung version, and *The Works of Dr Thomas Campion*, ed. A. H. Bullen (London: Chiswick Press, 1889) is also online; Bullen considered that the lyrics were all by Campion, but this has been disputed. A facsimile of the 1601 collection has been published. See on the text Tiziana Ragno, “Hero and Leander as Song: from Ovid’s *Heroides* to English Monody (1601, 1628–9)”, *Syllecta Classica* 23 (2012), 13–49.

Leander, hers appearing in print in 1605 in Pedro de Espinosa's *Flores*. Jane Whetnall rightly singles her out and is at pains to show how she is original, using a (female) poetic voice to respond to the narrative, rather than simply to present it.⁴⁶ The quatrains of the sonnet echo the others in the Spanish tradition in showing us the efforts of Leander in his fatal struggle against the sea (the contrast *agua/llama*, water and flame is there once more). Within this comes a general comment — “¡triste de aquel es desdichado y ama!”, how sad it is to be ill-starred in love. But Leander did reach his desired place, albeit “con cuerpo muerto y gloria incierto” dead, and uncertain of glory. The terms for unlucky, unhappy, ill-starred (*desdichado*) and uncertain (*incierto*), as well as the notion of dying in the sea, are then picked up by the poetic voice in the final part of the sestet, which interprets the story by making it into an image applied introspectively:

Y desdichado, yo, que, en mar incierto,
muriendo entre las aguas de mi llanto,
aún no espero tal bien después de muerta.

(And unfortunate am I, on an uncertain sea, dying in the waters of my tears, while not hoping for such good after death).

There is a faint echo in the *mar incierto* of some of the medieval allegorizations, but at the end the link is made with the story, specifically with the dying Leander, rather than Hero. The speaker, while suffering, cannot hope even for the glory that Leander has received.

A later and far more general, though in some respects similar approach is that in a poem in nine quatrains by Louise Victorine (Choquet) Ackermann (1813–1890), ‘La Lampe d’Héro’.⁴⁷ There are some similarities with the approach in Rossetti’s sonnet, but the story itself is presented in greater detail. Leander (named only as *l’amant d’Héro*, Hero’s lover) swims towards the lamp, which is *vigilante et fidèle*, vigilant and faithful, an immortal star amidst the raging sea. But it can be blown out, and the bold swimmer swallowed up by the waves.

46 Her dates are unknown. The text, originally in Pedro de Espinosa, *Primera parte de la flores de poetas illustres de España* (Valladolid: Luys Sanches, 1605) is in Moya de Baño, *El Tema*, p. 225 and (with a first line which reverses the first two words to *Rompe Leandro*) at the head of Whetnall’s article, “Hipólita”, p. 893. Whetnall places the work in context and considers specific debts, as to Sá de Miranda, rather than Garcilaso; see p. 895f. Whetnall also stresses its originality. Krummrich has a translation.

47 Louise Ackermann, *Contes et Poésies* (Paris: Hachette, 1863), pp. 265–7 (online in Gallica). Ackermann treats other classical themes.

The fifth quatrain turns the tale into an extended simile as the poetic voice speaks in the first-person plural. Just as the sea threatens to engulf *cet enfant d'Abydos*, that child from Abydos, we too are threatened. However, in the same dangers and the same darkness we have the same flame: “Nous avons le même flambeau”, and must keep our eyes on *la lueur lointaine*, the distant glow, which gives us courage. The final quatrain consolidates the image in an address to the lamp, but the overall effect is a little too general, simply lauding the light of love, using Hero’s lamp for a focus for the concept that love is indeed all you need. The original story was intended to inspire, of course, not to be imitated, and here it is used to that end. Whatever the intent, it is difficult not to recall that at the end of the original story Hero’s lamp *was* extinguished, and to call upon its symbolic counterpart not to do so is ambiguous at best:

O phare de l'Amour! qui dans la nuit profonde
 Nous guides à travers les écueils d'ici-bas,
 Toi que nous voyons luire entre le ciel et l'onde,
 Lampe d'Héro, ne t'éteins pas!

(O beacon of Love, guiding us in the darkest night through the dangerous reefs of the world, you, whom we see shining between the sky and the waves, lamp of Hero, do not go out!)

Roughly contemporary with Ackermann, Charles Tennyson Turner (1808–79), the elder brother of Alfred, has a different approach in a Shakespearean sonnet entitled ‘Hero and Leander, or the Boy’s Hellespont’, but he again offers a personal response. Hero’s lamp is again central, but the real force lay always in the names: “Two lovers’ names were all my Hellespont”, and the poetic voice has suffered with both. Both names are given in the title, only Hero’s in the poem, which underlines the enduring strength of the narrative itself; the torch of Hero lives on, whatever else may pass down the Hellespont:

And wide-spread sails of war ran glowing past
 Love’s watch-fire, till, again, the impassion’d light
 Burst on the lonely swimmer, doubly bright.⁴⁸

Almost exactly four hundred years after Philip Rosseter’s piece, a modern parallel is found with a significant variation in another lyric for singing, Adam Guettel’s ‘Hero and Leander’ (1999). The New York composer and lyricist

48 Charles Tennyson Turner, *Collected Sonnets, Old and New* (London: Macmillan, 1884), p. 217 (sonnet 182, first published in 1868).

Guettel (b. 1964) produced a musical collection, *Myths and Hymns* (originally *Saturn Returns*), which includes songs on religious and mythological themes, deliberately bringing together these initially “dissimilar cosmologies”.⁴⁹ The other lyrics are either mythological (‘Icarus’, ‘Pegasus’), or Christian (‘Jesus the Mighty Conqueror’), the latter apparently inspired by or adapted from a hymnal (*The Temple Trio*, 1886) found in a second-hand bookshop. The songs were first performed in a concert in New York and have been revived and recorded. The song of Hero and Leander, like Rosseter’s, assumes knowledge of the narrative as the male voice asks whether he could be Leander, or whether the beloved could be Hero, as a lighthouse on the shoreline. This is Leander expressing his longing, and the concept of swimming is there as it was in Rosseter (reinforced here by the music, which has the performance direction “in rolling waves”). This time, however, there is a full acknowledgement of the story, in that the singer praises the passion of Hero and Leander, declaring that even should he drown, his “loving you was meant to be”. As a declaration of love, the strongest echo here is again of Ovid, whose letters contain the same awareness of *possible* death. The force of, and passion within the ancient story is acknowledged and personally assimilated; but since the speaker/singer is not Leander, the distancing means that death is not inevitable.

It is appropriate, however, to end with Byron, whose poem “Written after Swimming from Sestos to Abydos” of May 9, 1810 is probably the best-known (genuinely) personal reflection of the legend, and certainly the most practical, since Byron did undertake Leander’s swim (in this case from Sestos to Abydos, from the European to the Asian side, as he himself noted) on the morning of May 3, 1810. Byron also wondered why no-one else seems to have tested out that part of the story. He swam together with Lieutenant Ekenhead, observed by those on the frigate *Salsette*, and this is also referred to in Byron’s *Don Juan* 11, 105, where Don Juan’s own swimming prowess is being praised:⁵⁰

He could, perhaps, have passed the Hellespont,
As once (a feat on which ourselves we prided)
Leander, Mr Ekenhead and I did.

49 I have used the printed vocal selection *Myths and Hymns* (New York: Williamson Music, 2002). The song ‘Hero and Leander’, pp. 83–7 has a 1999 copyright, and an album of the songs was produced by Nonesuch Records in 1999. How the two types of song interrelate is not always entirely clear, although a shared sense of longing is apparent in many of them. Guettel is, incidentally, the grandson of the composer Richard Rodgers.

50 *Don Juan* (1819–24) and the individual poem are both widely available. A convenient text is: George Gordon, Lord Byron, *A Selection from his Poems*, ed. A. S. B. Glover (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1954), p. 215 (*Don Juan* 11, cv) and p. 37 (‘Written after Swimming ...’). Byron undertook other feats of swimming in Venice.

Byron's act depended, of course, on the tale. Leander "was nightly wont" to cross the Hellespont in dark December, we are told, and we are reminded of how familiar the story is, especially perhaps, to young women: "What maid will not the tale remember?" Leander swam during the wintry tempest, but Byron, a "degenerate modern wretch" is still proud to have done it "in the genial month of May." Leander swam for Love, Byron for Glory (both capitalised). The last of the five quatrains deflates the whole thing with an anti-climax, however. Men are still plagued by the gods, but while Leander died, Byron just got a feverish chill: "For he was drowned, and I've the ague." The long tradition of Leander drowned is capped by Byron himself, this time not just a poetic voice, catching a chill.

And yet the lines are not unimportant to the reception of the legend. The poem still celebrates the story, which might in its detail be "doubtful", but which is still remembered by all readers, and not, of course, just by those young maids most likely to favour sentimental love-tales. The gods, too, are still there. Byron might mock them at the end with his *plague you/ague* rhyme, but he still invokes Venus in the text, and Leander still swam for love. A mixture of different responses is demanded of the reader: the story *is* still known, it *is* about love and the malice of the gods, and despite the self-deprecating joke at the end, it was this ancient story, factually doubtful or not, that prompted Byron to test the central fact of Leander's swim. The poem does not mention that it took Byron and Ekenhead several hours to swim against the strong current, which would not have left much of the night. But perhaps, compared with Leander, the modern world has indeed become degenerate and there really were giants in the earth in those days.

7 The Modern Lyric

Interest in the narrative continues, and there are modern examples of extended treatments of the whole story as well as single poems. The Norwegian poet and essayist Stein Mehren (b. 1935) includes a lyric on the theme, "Hero og Leandros", with the subtitle "Skildring av et berømt ekteskap i antikken" (description of the famous marriage in antiquity), in a collection published in 1973.⁵¹ It is not an easy piece, in seven unrhymed quatrains in which the word *hverandre*, each other, recurs regularly. It seems to be in the voice of Leander,

⁵¹ Stein Mehren, *Dikt for enhver som våget* (Oslo: Aschehoug, 1973), p. 36. The title means "poems for anyone who dares").

summing up the relationship, the dangers of which are not just physical, but emotional. The two are so completely enclosed in each other that love is an addiction (*avhengighet*), and their dream is outside them, like a lamp, which is here transformed and magnified, so that the pair cast a shadow for miles:

Se, vi kaster skyggen
av dens lys ... milevidt! Så mørk er

skyggen. Ja, mørk som Hellesponten
og mørkere.

(Look, we cast a shadow from the light ... miles wide! So dark is the shadow. Yes, dark as the Hellespont and darker.)

They should let each other go, but cannot, of course, even though the love will destroy (*ødelegge*, another key word) them both. The poem opens with the statement that destruction or ruin (*Det som er ødelagt*), binds them together, and later they are anchors for each other, keeping each other in place. The image of the shadow-casting lamp concludes the piece:

Vi
har forkastet hverandres nærende lys
Men kastet skyggen av hverandre. Overalt

(We rejected each other's healing light but cast the shadow over each other. Everywhere)

The poem enters into the psychology of the relationship, which is so intense that its brightness casts a shadow darker than the Hellespont itself. The key words in the lyric — *hverandre*, *ødelegge*, *skyggen* — sum it up: their unity, their destruction, and the darkness of the shadow and the night. The subtitle still reminds us that this is a classical story, all of which has to be familiar to the audience if the poem is to make sense at all.

More recently, and in contrast with the single lyric, the French academic, critic and poet Didier Coste (b. 1946) has produced an extended set of lyric poems in fifteen cantos of seven quatrains, his “Héro et Léandre. Poème en xv chants” (Hero and Leander, poem in fifteen cantos) of 2008. He also stresses the antiquity of the story (referring to Musaios and to Marot). The opening two quatrains of the first canto (“invocation”) are self-conscious in their regard for

the tradition as well as modern in their lyrical style, and show us Leander, who has waited for years on the arid shores of Abydos, between ancient Asia and explored Europe, and then Hero, “l’heroïne de cette histoire”, playing on her name, whose defeat of her prison near Sestos will be her victory over death. The indication of death is there from the start. At the declaration of their love, she says that she has made her vows and that her heart is now numb. The vocabulary is unusual, as it is in Coste’s sequence of ten sonnets, poetically striking but also not easy to interpret, with the title “Les enfances de Léandre” (2012). Coste describes the sonnets as “the first part of *Le Dit de Héro et Léandre*”. The focus for Coste’s exploration of a different aspect of the tale is interesting, and death and the storms are there from the beginnings, while Leander is aware of Hero — she is a pale figure in one poem — even before she is there, so that the established constants still control the whole.⁵²

8 Conclusion

The lyrics presented here can only be a selection. A full catalogue would require a great deal more world and time and might well have the same effect at Schrader’s notes on Musaios, drowning the couple a second time. But both the continuity of reception and the extraordinary variety within it are striking, with works as diverse as Donne’s epigram, Garcilaso’s sonnet, Hölderlin’s dramatic scene, Ackermann’s personalised but broad interpretation, Mehren’s experimental verse, and Byron’s self-awarded swimming-certificate. However, all depend in the first instance upon the continued knowledge of the story and the polar elements of Leander as active and Hero as passive, while Ovid, Martial and Musaios remain as influential as ever. Leander has time to express his emotions in Ovid’s letter, but within the reality of the story his emotional state is only in full view when he first encounters Hero (which is rarely reflected in the lyric), or when he is under greatest pressure on his final swim (which, with the support of Martial, is very commonly reflected indeed). Hero’s emotions are far more varied, as they were in Ovid: wanting Leander to come to her

52 “Héro et Léandre. Poème en XV Chants”, in: Dubost, *Topographie de la rencontre*, pp. 272–84, following Coste’s study “Une rencontre infiniment répétée: Héro et Léandre”, in: *Topographie de la rencontre dans le roman européen*, ed. Jean-Pierre Dubost (Clermont-Ferrand: Presses Universitaires Blaise Pascal, 2008), pp. 261–71 (he refers to the work as in progress in that article). The sequence *Les enfances de Léandre* (2012) is available on (from the Mediathèque littéraire Gaetan Doste, April 2015) with a public reading by the poet at: academia.edu/19456510/Les_enfances_de_Léandre_public_reading. The reading is available via YouTube.

but afraid for his safety, fearing a rival, jealous of his masculine freedoms, not wishing him to leave when he is alive, and, when he dies, being unable to live without him. The lyric poet may use the story with the expectation of arousing pathos, or the admiration of mutual love and of defiant, if doomed, courage, or by relating it to the inner world of the poetic voice itself. To return yet again to Donne (and to his glossator, Daniel Georg Morhof), the whole story is capable of so much expression precisely because it is elemental.

The Challenge of Drama

*The Sea should have consented to restore,
His Hero and Leander safe to Shoar.
But what a Poet cannot do, You may;
They'll live to Morrow if You like the Play.*



In a throwaway line in one of the surveys of the Hero and Leander material, we are told that the theme was handled before Grillparzer by “some mediocre dramatists,” and the adjective is used regularly, though not necessarily fairly, of many of the earlier dramatic versions.¹ These have been relatively little examined, but they are not in any case particularly numerous, especially if we omit not only the burlesques but also operatic libretti or plays designed to be performed with music. In the late nineteenth century Max Hermann Jelinek found himself rather at a loss when it came to dramatizations. He looked at the opera first, discussing Badovero’s libretto and swiftly dismissing that by Herklots, and only then turned to stage drama, noting that some plays, such as one by Lope de Vega, were lost, although one or two that he mentions have since become available.² Jelinek did look, admittedly under the heading of opera, at a monodrama by Jean-Pierre de Florian (though not at a German adaptation of it), before moving on to two German dramatists, first Alois Büssel, and then, with perceptible relief on his part, Franz Grillparzer.

The story of Hero and Leander presents, on the face of it, major challenges for the stage. Much of the physical action, for example, involves someone swimming, although stagecraft and production can overcome all kinds of apparent obstacles. In any case, the emotions of the protagonists are actually

- 1 See for example George Henry Nettleton, *English Drama of the Restoration and Eighteenth Century (1642–1780)* ([1932] New York: Cooper Square, 1968), p. 115f. He includes Stapylton in his “host of mediocrities”.
- 2 Moya del Baño, *El Tema*, refers, p. 131f., to Mira de Amescua, whose play was until recently available only in manuscript, and to two further Spanish dramas, now lost. Sébastien Perdices, “Leandro y Hero”, p. 214, notes that Boscán’s version may have influenced Lope de Vega’s *El Caballero de Olmedo*. Jelinek also mentions François de la Selve.

in the forefront, and the finest of the dramatic versions, that by Grillparzer, would turn the story into an intense psychological study focusing upon Hero, the arousal of young love, and the idea of vocation. Like the dramatic lyric, the monodrama typically centres upon Hero, the contemplative rather than the active protagonist.

There have been entirely non-verbal stage presentations of the narrative, just as there are ballets as well as operas. In March 1742, for example, a pantomime *Léandre et Héro* was produced at the Grand Théâtre du Palais des Tuilleries in Paris by Jean-Nicolas Servan (or Giovanni Niccolo Servadoni, 1695–1766). The Chevalier Servadoni was a French architect and stage-designer who put on elaborate visual spectacles of well-known classical tales. The brief accompanying pamphlet for this production makes the point that the story was so well-known that it could be put across “sans le secours des paroles”, without the aid of words. The very fact of this performance makes clear that with ingenuity the inherent difficulties manifestly *could* be overcome with stagecraft, even eschewing the need for language.³

The basic cast of characters is very small: Hero, Leander, and possibly her nurse. It is regularly expanded with the addition of parents, however, since their hostility is regularly introduced in all genres as an explanation for the clandestine love. Once Hero is defined as a priestess, too, new characters may be found accompanying or in authority over her. The families of the lovers may be further augmented with brothers and sisters, as well as friends, and the drama can expand both cast and action by providing alternative suitors for Hero and for Leander. Fishermen, a logical addition, sometimes appear, as does a watchman, a stock figure in the dawn-song tradition. Sometimes the known story of Hero and Leander can be pushed into the background by new material, and the basic narrative can even be changed radically. The gods do not often figure physically on stage except in earlier works, where we do encounter Neptune, Venus or Cupid, the Fates, and allegorical figures or personified natural forces or human attributes. Even Musaios himself (though probably not the Grammarian) occasionally joins the *dramatis personae*.

There is one technical dramatic problem to be faced by anyone casting a Hero and Leander play. Grillparzer commented upon it, and it is probably even more acute for the producers of operas: Hero and Leander are both very young, immature and innocent. This is always difficult to portray on stage, and here the performers need to appear young, but must be mature enough in acting (or indeed singing) to take on such a central part. The problem applies to many plays, and producers have tackled it in *Romeo and Juliet* with a greater or lesser

3 *Léandre et Héro ... représenté ... par le Chevalier Servadoni* (Paris: Pissot, 1742) online.

degree of success. We can decide for ourselves precisely how young Hero needs to be, but it is established that Juliet is in her very early teens (and it might be recalled that the age of marriage was as low as twelve in many countries until comparatively recent times – 1929 in Britain). Contemporary productions of Shakespeare would doubtless have used a necessarily young boy actor for Juliet, and modern film versions have been able to use young performers. The position was famously even more difficult in the production of Leonard Bernstein's *West Side Story*, where singing and dancing, as well as acting were all required of the ostensibly young characters (although the film version was able to employ a certain amount of sleight-of-hand). On stage the danger is always that of casting either Hero or Leander with an actor who, however skilled, looks too old to be believable.

While the number of extant dramatic versions before Grillparzer is not large, they cover a period from the sixteenth century down to the early nineteenth, with a concomitant variety of approaches in a range of languages. The eight dramas that we have (including a very free German adaptation of one of the French texts) are one each in Dutch/Flemish, English, Italian and Spanish, two in French, and finally two in German — the adaptation mentioned, plus a play published at around the time Grillparzer was just beginning to work on the theme. Others genuinely have been lost. We know of a *Léandre et Héro* by the seventeenth-century French dramatist and librettist Gabriel Gilbert (ca 1620–ca 1680), who wrote other classical pieces, but although there are recorded mentions of his play, with a date of 1667, we do not have it.⁴ So, too, there is a reference to a play done in Posen/Poznań in 1804 of which nothing seems to be known, and rather earlier than either, there appears to have been a Latin play put on at King's College, Cambridge, in 1598.⁵

Of the extant texts, actual performances are hard to assess. Stapylton's play, certainly, has an epilogue perhaps suggesting that if the audience wants to bring Hero and Leander back to life, they should come to the next performance, but it is hard to imagine the early Dutch/Flemish *Leander ende Hero* on stage at all. Finally, not all of these early dramas are necessarily to be condemned

4 Eleanor J. Pellet, *A Forgotten French Dramatist. Gabriel Gilbert (1620?-1680?)* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins Press, 1931), p. 24f. and p. 252. The play is praised in a letter of August 1667. See Charles de Fieux de Mouhy, *Abrégé de l'histoire du théâtre françois* (new edition: Paris: author, Jorry, Mérigot, 1780), I, 277, noting that the text was not printed. The work refers also to the play by de la Selve.

5 On the Posen play see Goedeke, *Grundriss*, VIII, 428. On the University Latin play at Kings, Cambridge (by William Johnson?) see the review by Hoenig of Jellinek, p. 37, with reference also to some of the burlesques.

out of hand as mediocre, although in one or two cases an even more pejorative adjective might be merited.

1 Colijn van Rijsssele (?), *Leander ende Hero* (Early 16th Century?)

A long and stylistically complex early Dutch/Flemish verse dramatization of the theme as 'Leander and Hero' in four sections appears as the last of a series of four plays, themselves grouped together as the second part of *Den handel der amoreusheyt* (the business of loving), which appeared in print in 1621. An initial volume under that main title had appeared in Brussels in 1583 with an acrostic spelling out the name of Johan Baptista Houwaert (1533–99), who also appears as the named author on the title page of the 1621 volume. It is now considered, however, that our text is more likely to be the work of the slightly earlier Colijn van Rijsssele, whose dates appear to be from the mid- or early fifteenth to the start of the sixteenth century, and who was born either in Brussels or — given the name he used — in Lille (Rijs(s)el), in Flanders. He is known as the writer of a poetic *Spiegel der minnen* (mirror of love), and the courtly love tradition is certainly reflected in the Hero and Leander play. The play uses Ovid in some detail (perhaps the title reflects the order of the *Heroides*), but not Musaios, whose work was not printed until the end of the fifteenth century, and Hero is not a priestess. Although, as has been pointed out, this is in many ways a late medieval work, some aspects of it are surprisingly modern.

Colijn van Rijsssele was a *rederijker*, a member of a renaissance dramatic or rhetorical society which produced highly stylised and mannered material of which this play is a typical example.⁶ It is announced in the prologue to *Leander ende Hero* that there shall be four 'plays', but while *spel* does mean a play, and the four sections have a prologue each, these 'plays' should really be thought of as acts. The language is mannered, with a great number of Latinate words in the varied and sometimes (over-)elaborate verse, with repeated and internal

6 See on the attribution Eugène de Bock, *Opstellen over Colijn van Rijsssele en andere Rederijkers* (Antwerp: de Sikkel, 1958), pp. 136f. and 161f. See also the introduction to the Dutch dawn-songs by Leonard Forster in Hatto, *Eos*, pp. 473–504, esp. p. 484f. The first volume had as a full title *Den Handel der Amoreusheyt, begrepen in dry Boecken* (Brussels: Jan van Brent, 1583), with a play on Jupiter and Io. The second part is *Den Handel der Amoreusheyt Inhoudend Vier Poetische Spelen* (Rotterdam: Jan van Waesberghe de Jonghe, 1621). This collection has plays on Aeneas and Dido, Narcissus and Echo, Mars and Venus, and Hero and Leander; it is available online via Google Books, and also with a clear transcript in the *digitale bibliotheek voor de Nederlandse letteren* (dbnl.org/tekst/houw001). The text is foliated and the Hero and Leander section begins on Z2r and continues to Gg2v. The spelling of the printed text is maintained.

rhymes. Notable, too, is the *rederijker* technique of objectivising the psychology of the characters with the introduction of personified attributes like ‘loving affection’ or (as a negative example) ‘calumny’. The prologues to each section are dialogues between *Amoureuse fantasije* and *Poëtelijk gheest* (broadly speaking ‘Love’ and ‘Poetry’), and the cast-list for each includes additional human characters (Hero’s father, Leander’s parents, Hero’s nurse, a watchman), two different personified features, and the gods, the latter group including most of Olympus, plus Aeolus, Atropos and Fate. The personifications comment at various point as a kind of chorus, and interact with the human characters and the gods, although the latter are (mostly) invisible to the humans. The whole structure, therefore, is of some complexity. The play deals with the psychology of the couple and explains details of the background plot not present in Ovid. The story is also placed, if a little circumspectly, into a courtly love context with all its ingredients: secrecy, illicit love (here admittedly not adulterous), partings at dawn, the malice of others, and above all else the religion of love, the worship — implicitly at least — of Venus or Cupid/*Amor*.⁷

The prologue to the first section gives an idea of what will happen, but also makes clear that the story is a warning against the sins and errors of excessive love, so that people “niet varen en zonden ghelijk Leander” (do not fall into sin as Leander did, Z3v). The address is to young women and young men “Die in den vloet der liefden noch woelen” (who are still tossed in the flood-tide of love), that they “Moeghen dit exempel wel voor oghen stellen” (should keep this example before their eyes, Z3v–Z4r). Cupid, they are warned, will plague you. The establishing of a moral of this kind aligns the work with Hans Sachs and others, but it is also somewhat ambiguous, and a brief *naerprologhe*, a kind of envoi, again between Love and Poetry, picks it up again later.

The personifications in the first act approximate to Affection and Mutual Feeling, and the introductory additions to the received narrative are convincing and logical. Hero’s father is a prince (we are in the territory of the *Königskinder*), and his wife has left him a beautiful daughter, Hero. He consults the image of Apollo for a prophecy on the child’s future and is told that she will prosper as long as she does not submit to Cupid. To keep her from the perils of love he entrusts her to the care of a nurse or foster-mother in his fortress at Sestos. In one of the interpolated discussions, Affection suggests, quite correctly, that this might not be a good idea. With her nurse in the tower at Sestos, Hero is aware of her psychological situation:

7 See the classic introduction to the theme by C. S. Lewis, *The Allegory of Love* ([1936], New York: OUP, 1958), pp. 1–23.

Ick moet myn jonghe natuere dwinghen
 Ick en mach dansen noch springen, wandelen noch zingen
 ...
 Door vreesse moet ick natuere verdringhen (Aaiv)

(I have to repress my youthful feelings, I am not allowed to dance, go out, or sing.... Through fear I have to suppress natural feelings).

She persuades her nurse that they should go secretly into Sestos to see the festival, and the initially reluctant nurse agrees, trusting that Venus will preserve them. Hero sacrifices two doves to Venus and asks for a true lover. Venus and Cupid discuss what they are going to do, and when he is struck by Cupid's dart, Leander debates with himself (and with the personifications) about whether he has the rhetorical skills to speak to Hero. Eventually he declares himself, but Hero at first replies "tIs te vergheefs dat ghy my van liefde spreek" (Bb3v, you speak to me of love in vain), and tells him about Apollo's prophecy, advising him that there are plenty of other fish in the sea (Daer zijn Dochters ghenoech van edeler aert, Bb4r, there are enough noble daughters to be found). Leander, however, insists that prophecies are not always accurate, and that Fate can overrule the gods. Hero agrees to meet him at the tower, which is, she says, separated from his home in Abydos *met en kleyn zee*, by a small body of water (Bb4v). Leander says (an obvious answer to the familiar question) that he has no boat, ship or sailors, but will swim to her if she will place a lantern to guide him. The tale has been set in motion, with Apollo's prophecy as a rationale for Hero's quasi-imprisonment set against the natural feelings and desires of a young woman wishing to enjoy life. The nurse assists her, and Leander, who had worried aloud, with rhetorical flourishes, about his powers of persuasive rhetoric (this is, after all, a *rederijker* play), does indeed persuade Hero to meet him. Despite the unseen presence of the gods and the comments of the quasi-chorus, there is realism in Hero's desires and Leander's overcoming first of his own reticence and then of Hero's objections.

The second *spel* has a prologue discussion between the spirits of poetry and love once again, and the audience is reminded that they have been told how "Venus en Cupido hebben ghebracht/ Leandrum en Hero onder hun protectie" (Bb7r, Venus and Cupid have taken Leander and Hero into their care), and also that "natuere altijt wilt baren haer kracht" (nature will always have its power felt). The cast now includes a watchman, and there are different personified figures, this time representing (again very roughly speaking) the course of love, and recklessness. Hero awaits Leander, asking Venus to give him courage. The

internal rhymes and assonances of Leander's eulogy of Hero exemplify the style of the whole:

Sy is de schoone Roose onder den doren,
 Die ick heb verkoren en trou ghesworen,
 Die oyt was gheboren
 Van eender Vrouwen:
 Ick bin verloren, mach ich met haer geen vreucht orboren,
 Dus is myn besporen, achter en voren ...

(Cc4v–Cc5r, She is the beautiful rose amongst thorns whom I have chosen and to whom I have sworn faith above any born of woman: I shall be lost if I can share no joy with her — that spurs me on all the time).

Hero still fears that her father might find them and wishes that she could swim to meet Leander (an Ovidian note), but he arrives, and the love-scene is largely presented by means of the allegorical figures. The action is ended by the watchman, outside in the harbour, who sings a dawn-song, a formal *aubade*, warning the lovers that it is time to part: “Staet op ghy Amoureußen,/ Staet op ‘tis meer dan tijt (Dd1r, Arise, you lovers, arise, it is more than time). Leander responds, and there is a tender farewell. Plays in both parts of the collection regularly include such dawn-songs, sung by a watchman, which are medieval in character and part of the courtly love tradition; they are well represented in Dutch and Flemish in any case.⁸

The third act presents a new development, as two personifications, Envy and Calumny, work upon Leander's parents. It is again part of the courtly love tradition that the necessarily secret lovers are plagued by spies, and that others, envious of their happiness, spread lies (which are not always strictly speaking untrue) about them. Here the two forces tell Leander's mother about the prophecy, and then tell his father that she is kept in the tower at Sestos so that she can be preserved. The parents try to persuade Leander to find a woman in Abydos, and their grounds are perfectly reasonable: “O Sone, Sone, ghy doet ons grote blame ...” (Dd8r, O son, son, you are bringing great shame upon us). While apparently agreeing, Leander expresses in a monologue his inability to leave Hero, and vows to spend the next night with her in spite of the calumniators. The personifications discuss whether or not Leander will go again, and Envy concludes, with a proverb that will be reiterated, and which

⁸ See Forster, “Dutch”, in Hatto, *Eos*, pp. 484–6. The example he cites from the play of Jupiter and Io in the first volume is close to this, and he prints a dozen further examples, pp. 489–504.

is not inappropriate in its form here, that “De krujck zal zoo langh te water gaen dat sy zal breken” (Ee2r, literally: the pitcher goes to the water so long that it will break). They decide to work on Hero and place into her head the anxieties that she displays in the *Heroides*. In a monologue Hero worries, therefore, about where Leander is — we gather that it is the sixth night of absence (*Leander Heroni*, 25) — and she even wonders why he does not write to her, a nice reflection of the *Heroides* form. The nurse tries to reassure her, pointing out that even large ships are confined to the harbour, but Hero wonders whether Leander has another love. The final speech is Leander’s, however, who first implores Boreas for calm seas, but eventually curses Neptune and Aeolus, and declares that he will brave the waters.

Opening the fourth section, Poetry and Love tells us what is going to happen (in a more than usually mannered style — the last speech by *Poëtelyck Gheest* has some lines with three internal rhymes), and this time virtually all the gods appear (with Aeolus and Atropos). The two other speakers this time, however, are slightly different, since the first, *Rampzalighe Fortuyn*, is an embodiment of harsh fate; the other is *Goddessloose Desperatie*, godless despair — the theological *desperatio*, complete despair without any hope. The gods debate at some length how they can damage humankind, since humans no longer show them proper respect, a motif found elsewhere in the tradition. Neptune is angry because he has thus far assisted Leander, but Leander has cursed him and defied his own parents. *Fortuyn*, Fate will deal with them, therefore — “Sy hebben solaes en vreucht ghenoech ghehadt” (Ff2r, they have had enough solace and delight), and the image of the pitcher going too often to the well is picked up again as Atropos is called in.

Leander’s last speech as he struggles against the waves invokes all the gods, but in vain, and as he bids Hero farewell, Harsh Fate and Atropos dispose of him. *Desperatio* now visits Hero, who had fallen asleep (after so many sleepless nights) and Boreas had blown out the lantern. The dolphin dream is invoked, and Ovid is echoed again when Despair tells Hero: “En dat hy verdroncken is dat is v schult” (Ff7r, And it is your fault that he drowned). The idea has effectively been moved from Leander to Hero. Fate and Atropos then drive her to drown herself. The nurse, who had also slept, realises what has happened, and declares that she will have them buried in a single grave.

As noted, there is a final extra dialogue between Love and Poetry, which summarises the tale: nature will take its course — especially, with the young — and too fiery a love can only cause concern. Cupid is blind. The moral is therefore a very general one, as in some of the medieval versions: love, though natural, can rob you of your senses and lead you to defy your parents and the gods (or indeed God, given the Christian tone of *Goddelloose Desperatie*).

The interest of the play within the context of literary reworkings of the tale lies in the personified psychology of the main characters, and the layered presentation of human actions, controlled by emotions which are made visible. But the lovers are also affected by external forces, not so much the gods (though Cupid sets it all in motion), but natural desires, and *rampzalighe fortune*, harsh and unavoidable fate. The setting of the story in the medieval framework of courtly love, itself always a warning against excess in love as much as a celebration of it, is a further element in this version. The florid (and sometimes overly classical) linguistic style is, however, at some distance from modern taste.

2 Francesco Bracciolini dell'Api, *Hero, e Leandro. Favola Marittima* (1630)

Two plays written at roughly the same time, one in Italian, the other in Spanish, expand the basic narrative, not just with supporting characters, but also with additional plots, an approach which reaches its furthest point in the English drama by Robert Stapylton, where the additions submerge the original. Francesco Bracciolini dell'Api (1566–1645) from Pistoia was an extremely prolific Italian dramatist, poet and librettist, and his “maritime fable” is something of a curiosity in the reception-history of the narrative. The drama in (varied) verse is in five acts, with a prologue and interludes performed by the gods (who are very much in the machine throughout), and finally a postlude spoken by no less a person than Musaïos himself, admittedly probably the mythical one.⁹ What is immediately striking about this work is that it was composed for the celebration of a marriage in the Barberini family, with whom Bracciolini was connected, that in 1630 between Taddeo Barberini and Anna Colonna. The marriage is referred to in the fourth interlude, but a narrative which ends in the tragic death of the two lovers does not on the face of it suggest itself as a completely suitable subject for a wedding celebration, even if it was alluded to in the Epithalamium by Sidonius Apollinaris as an illustration of the potential strength of love.

We are informed in a prologue, a dialogue between Venus and Cupid (*Amore*), that although Musaïos told the tale in Greek and thought, as have others, that the main characters both died, we are now to be given the real

9 *Hero, e Leandro. Favola marittima del Bracciolino dell'Api* (Rome: Guglielmo Facciotti, 1630). The work is available online from various sources. The headers of some pages of the fifth act refer to the fourth. The name is given as ‘Bracciolino’ on the title page.

story. The outlines are still there, although there are some new characters, and the revised story is controlled by the actions in a series of interludes, which ostensibly separate the gods from the human characters. The father of Hero, here named Alfesibeo, wants to thwart the love, and wants Hero to marry someone else; Hero's nurse, too, is a familiar figure who appears again. But Bracciolini was also a librettist, and this work is thoroughly operatic in several respects, with a cross-dressed character (Alceo, *in habito de fille*),¹⁰ a last-minute revelation of Hero's hitherto unrecognised brother (luckily, since he might have married her), and, after the apparent tragedy, a happily matrimonial ending provided by the gods, with the help of another not entirely unknown figure, a dolphin.

Many of the speeches are very long. The first part of the story is told by Hero in retrospect, and the situation is revealed to Hero's father, whose anger becomes a driving force. There is a quasi-Shakespearean balcony scene in the fourth act in which Hero at the window urges Leander to flee for fear that her father will kill him. He declares "E quale è la mia vita/ Se non tù?" (p. 62, what is my life without you) and a stichomythic passage develops their love, until he has to escape from her father's men. In the fourth interlude, however, we see the gods establishing an island with a temple. Hero has been promised by her father to a *pescatore*, the fisherman Melicreto, but in the fifth act we are told by the nurse that Leander has drowned, and Hero has thrown herself into the sea and is also dead. Melicreto, however, who goes to find her, reveals that a series of wonders have happened. The weary Leander was carried like Arion on the back of a dolphin, and Hero was also rescued. Moreover, it has been revealed to Melicreto by Venus that he is Hero's long-lost brother, and the operatic finale is complete: "Andiam", says Alfesibeo, "A veder' Hero, e consentir d'accordo/ Alle nozze die lei, che il ciel benigno/ Ordinò sopra il sole ..." (p. 87, Let us go and see Hero and consent to her marriage, which has been ordained by a benign heaven above the sun).

Cupid had declared at the start that people have lied about him — "Io sono/ Author di vita, e non di morte" (p. 9, I am the author of life, not of death) — and at the end, in the final postlude, Musaios is brought on stage to sort things out once and for all, as he now rejoices in the lives of these two faithful lovers, who have been praised and mourned for thousands of years. He recants,

10 Shakespeare provides familiar examples, and Moya del Baño, *El Tema*, p. 137, points out in her comments on Mira de Amescua (who had spent time in Italy), that cross-dressed characters are almost obligatory in dramas of the period (Hero and her maid dress as men in that play). Here Alceo as Fillide, Hero's maid, has an interesting relationship with her, and she and her father are both apparently taken in by the disguise.

and with great joy “di vita ministro, e non di morte”, presides over life, and not death (p. 88). The beguiling argument often used by Leander to overcome Hero’s devotions — that the goddess of love would surely encourage love — is at last actively endorsed.

The work manages to retain — though not to dramatize — much of the original narrative, even if Hero’s role as a *sacerdotessa* is not really developed, but the final part is a variation on the bringing together of the couple in the Elysian Fields, or their metamorphosis into something which will unite them permanently. The controlling gods have been relegated to a series of interludes, although at the end it is reportedly Venus herself who reveals the series of wonders (“crescon le meraviglie”, p. 86, the wonders increase,). Giving Musaios a role is a conscious expression of literary awareness of the tradition, that this is an ancient and much-transmitted story, and his recantation, which echoes the words of a god, is a nice final twist. Like the gods, he is outside the drama, speaking *doppo mill’anni, e mille*, after thousands and thousands of years. In the later play by Stapylton we shall see Musaios again, but with an active part in the story itself, which he later decides to record.

3 Antonio Mira de Amescua, *Hero y Leandro* (before 1629)

The Spanish dramatist Antonio Mira de Amescua (1574/1578–1644 — the form of his name varies, and his dates are also unclear), lived for a time in Italy and was a friend of Lope de Vega, who referred to this play in 1629, giving us its *terminus ante quem*. Although it was thought to have disappeared, it survived (with more of the dramatist’s work) and has been edited from Manuscript 15264 in the Biblioteca Nacional in Madrid.¹¹ The play is in 2681 lines, in varied metrical forms, in three *jornadas*, effectively three acts, and is notable for providing alternative suitors both for Hero and Leander, Polidoro and Mitilene (Leander’s cousin) respectively. This offers a balance of action, supported by Leander’s friend Nicanor and his servant Floro, plus Hero’s companion Silena. Parental or family influence is not predominant this time, although the play as such is convoluted, with some vigorous action, disguises (including cross-dressing again),

11 Antonio Mira de Amescua, *La Gran Comedia de Hero y Leandro*, ed. Álvaro Ibáñez Chacón (Alicante: *Bibliotheca Virtual*, 2014) (online through the Miguel de Cervantes virtual library). It is cited here by line-number. There is a useful analysis and summary of the involved plot in Moya del Baño, *El Tema*, pp. 131–40, and the text is also in her appendix, pp. 150–211. The relative whereabouts of Sestos and Abydos seem unclear in the text. The work is in Krummrich. See Karl C. Gregg, “A Brief Biography of Antonio Mira de Amescua”, *Bulletin of the Comediantes* 26 (1974), 14–22.

paintings, tokens in the wrong hands, intrigues and misunderstandings. Hero, for example, says that she has heard the voice of Venus proclaiming death to Leander, but interprets this in her own way, goes with Polidoro to Abydos and pretends to kill Leander. Leander's cousin, Mitilene, who hopes to marry him, believes that he is dead, but her family assume she is mad and postpone the possible marriage. Meanwhile, Leander sails (rather than swims) to Sestos with his servant, Floro, who is important at various points in the action. When it seems that Mitiline is to marry Leander after all, Floro tells her that Leander wants to poison her.

The side-plots, errors and attendant stage-business give way at the end, however, to the traditional narrative: Leander has to swim on a stormy night, following the light of the lamp (which Hero entrusts to her companion, and about the strength of which Floro is dubious, 2474). Hero echoes Garcilaso — “pasando el mar Leandro el animoso” (2493) — so that the work locates itself within the extensive Spanish tradition. Leander, again in concord with the Spanish sonnets, cites Martial's epigram (2540–44), in the tragic situation where he will not, of course, be spared until his return. This time the additional motif of Hero's name on his lips as he dies is intensified even further by sound-play: “Yo muero ... pues ‘Hero’ digo cuando digo ‘muero’” (2550f. I die, and say ‘Hero’ when I say ‘I am dying’).

Hero sacrifices herself after a speech of nearly a hundred lines in which she prays in vain to Venus (“Deidad hermosa de Chipre,” 2613, beautiful Cyprian deity). She throws herself into the sea but is fully aware of the nobility of her own death, which she sees as the ultimate good. Death must receive her “para que, muertos, seamos/ ejemplos lo mis insignes/ de amantes ...” (2661–3, so that, when we are dead, we may be examples of the most famous of lovers). With that, the famous tale and tragedy of Hero and Leander is complete: “historia y tragedia insigne/ de Hero y Leandro” (2679f.) This summary — spoken by a minor character — reminds us that this is a well-known story, and Hero has herself pointed up its exemplary nature. Their only afterlife is again the fame.

As indicated, the metrics vary, and there are some very long speeches, as well as frequent use of dramatic asides, although the language can be inventive — Floro points out that the name “Hero” (*ero*) is “¡Futuro de *sum*, *es*, *ful*!” (218), the future, therefore, of being. Although Leander constantly takes Hero as a goddess, Hero herself rejects the adulation of the crowds at the start, saying that honour should be given only to the goddess in the temple (123–5). However, the gods themselves do not have a direct role, and the work is less elaborate than that of Bracciolini, as well as lacking his contrived happy-end. This version is also notable for the dramatic additions and devices around the

central story seen already in the play by Bracciolini, and which will be even more prominent with Stapylton. But in the last analysis, Mira de Amescua's additions are peripheral in a drama at the centre of which is the old tale of the lover who must swim and will drown, and whose lover will follow him in demonstration of faith unto death; the long-forgotten work remains one of the truest of the early dramas to the original story.

4 François de la Selve, *Les amours infortunées de Leandre, et d'Heron* (1633)

Not a great deal is known about the Sieur de la Selve of Montpellier, who was a lawyer in Nîmes in the early seventeenth century (his dates are unclear; he seems to be a contemporary of Corneille). He appears to have written only one play, depicting the 'ill-fated loves of Leander and Hero' and described as a *tragicomédie*. According to the brothers Parfaict, the eighteenth-century theatre historians, it was based on the poem by Musaios, although this is not really the case.¹² It was published in 1633 and survives in a single copy in Montpellier. Jellinek thought that it had been lost entirely, but now not only has the text been edited, but the unique seventeenth-century copy is available in digitised form.¹³ The five-act play is mainly in rhymed alexandrine couplets (difficult, but well sustained), with a variation in form for some of the dialogue between Hero and Leander. Ovid is the principal influence, although there is

12 See the *Histoire du théâtre françois depuis ses origines jusqu'au présent* by François and Claude Parfaict (1698–1753 and 1701–1777), volume v (Paris: le Mercier and Saillant, 1745), pp. 1–4. The play is described as following the epic by Musaios, and an extract (the lovers' farewell in act iv) is given, although the writers comment that the material is too well known to merit further samples. De la Selve is described as "avocat de Nîmes". Claude Parfaict, *Dictionnaire des théâtres de Paris* (Paris: Lambert, 1756 and later reprintings), vol. v, 105f. notes that this is his only known play.

13 Sieur de la Selve, *Les amours infortunées de Leandre, et d'Heron. Tragicomédie* (Montpellier: Jean Pech, 1633). The title on the first page of the play itself omits the word *infortunées*. Leandre is normal in French, but Hero is Heron on this occasion. Available online through the library in Montpellier, this text is cited with original spellings. The copy has errors, including scene-numbering and pagination. An unpaginated initial section includes a preface stressing how well-known the story is, and there is a dedicatory preface to Charles de Schomberg, Duc d'(H)alluin (1601–1656), Marshal of France. There are also several poems praising de la Selve and his play (an epigram is signed "C. Sch", probably the dedicatee; that by 'Lafontaine' is presumably not the fabulist, whose dates do not fit). Modern edition: François, Sieur de la Selve, *Les amours infortunées de Leandre et d'Heron*, ed. Jean-Charles Brunon (Montpellier: L'Entente Bibliophile, 1986), reviewed by Henri Michel, *Etudes Héraultaises* (1988), 179.

considerable variation on the basic plot. Seventeenth-century French literature was much preoccupied with the *questions d'amour*, theoretical considerations of the nature of love, and this work falls into that pattern.¹⁴ It might even be said that the starting point for the work is Hero's regularly echoed anxiety about the possibility of a *novus amor* (*Hero Leandro*, 104), since de la Selve sets Leander's love for Hero against another relationship. That the title has 'loves' in the plural is significant.

The *dramatis personae* already gives some indication of this. Leander and Acanthe are presented as "rivals" (in very general terms), and then comes Doris, who loves Leander but not Acanthe. Doris's father and Leander's mother appear, as does a servant of Leander's called Phorbas, and some sailors. Hero is accompanied by Lisene, her nurse, and Neptune is also listed. The play opens with Leander declaring his delight in the pleasures of love, while Acanthe objects that women — in this case Doris — prefer Leander to him (this is a motif that is also encountered elsewhere, although here Acanthe's envy plays a part in the plot). Although she is initially suspicious of Leander's protestations of love, Doris agrees that she will marry him, and they seek the approval of her father and his mother. Both are pleased, and Doris's father wishes to take her across the Hellespont to the *belle feste* (p. 10, the fine festival) at Sestos presided over by "Cette divine Heron, Pretresse de Cypris". Hero's role as priestess of Venus is not developed, although it does dictate the need for secrecy in the later love between the two principals. Leander will go to Sestos with them, and Acanthe remains wretched. Doris continues to express her anxiety; she has had a dream of misfortunes, but Leander reassures her.

In Sestos, Leander claims that he must leave them to go and settle a quarrel between two *cavaliers* of his acquaintance, and leaves with Phorbas. Doris's father, Alpheus, agrees that resolving discord is something which the gods favour, but Phorbas tells us with disapproval, that the whole thing is just an invention to cover Leander's fascination with the beautiful Hero. Indeed, Leander now declares in Ovidian fashion that "Pour moy la belle Heron est ma seule Deesse" (p. 20, beautiful Hero is my only goddess). Hero is equally smitten and finds him just as god-like. Lisene, who is less like the nodding old nurse in Ovid than an anticipation of Hero's livelier companions in later dramas, tells Hero that Leander has declared his love for her, but that his mother wants him to marry someone else. Hero's finds this ridiculous: *excuse ridicule* (p. 22).

Leander may love the pleasures of love, but he is apparently not, as things might have appeared thus far, simply a deceitful philanderer (although ironically, Doris had earlier suggested that all men are unreliable; *la donna e mobile*

14 Lough, *Seventeenth Century France*, pp. 238–40 discusses this in detail.

is reversed). In a soliloquy he asks pardon from Doris for his offence, commenting that “Vn demon plus puissant a vaincu ma constance” (p. 23, a more powerful demonic force has overcome my constancy). *Amour* is a powerful god, and Leander has tried a thousand times to banish him, but in vain. Only Hero fills his thoughts now, and when they meet in the temple, he expresses his love eloquently (in shorter stanzas), and she responds in the same form, but says that they must not be seen there and that their love must be secret. Lisene will make the arrangements, and these are familiar. Leander will swim to the tower, where Hero will set up *un superbe flambeau* (p. 30) on the topmost battlement. Leander has no worries about the Hellespont: “Cent fois mes jeunes bras ont traversé ses flots,/ Pour cela ie n’ay pas besoin de Matelots” (p. 30, a hundred times my young arms have crossed its waves/ and so I need no sailors).

In the third act, the disapproving Phorbas has, however, told Acanthe about the deceit, who then tells Doris. The pair want revenge (a similar plot is found in the later operas by Badovero and Lefranc), and Doris calls on the gods to assist her, since Leander has been trifling with her. She overhears him eagerly waiting for nightfall and accuses him of having been made mad by Hero (“cette Heron ta ravy ton bon sens”, p. 37). He defends himself, but hell, of course, hath no fury: “Tu verras ce que peut une Amante en fureur” (p. 39, you will see what a lover can do in her anger!). Leander at once dismisses her *vaines menaces*, her empty threats.

The fourth act begins with Hero waiting, and in a very long Ovidian soliloquy she worries specifically whether Doris, his earlier love, has reclaimed him. But then she imagines him on his way, and we see him *nageant* (swimming); one wonders how this was done on stage. After apostrophising the torch — “Adorable flambeau ... Phare le plus superbe et le plus glorieux” (p. 43, adorable torch, most wonderful and glorious guiding light) — a sequence of short-line stanzas asks for Neptune’s help and that of Venus, whose son, after all, is behind it all. Leander arrives at the tower and joins Hero, at which point the nurse, Lisene, has a scene to herself where she declares that we must now leave “nos amants ... dans ces doux combats” (p. 48, our lovers to their sweet struggles), as the relationship is consummated off-stage. The leave-taking when Leander has to go is a set-piece *aubade* in alternating short-line strophes, and Leander asks the gods to help him. The next scene, however, shows Neptune’s divine anger at this insolent fellow.¹⁵

15 In the 1633 text, scene VI, given on p. 53 as scene IV in error, is ascribed to Pluton, but references to the empire of the sea and to tridents indicate Neptune, who is in the *dramatis personae* and is invoked by Doris at the start of the final act.

The final act opens with Doris invoking Neptune to avenge the wrong done to her; the sea-god replies that her sorrow has touched him. Doris and Acanthe are now together. The scene then changes to Hero, who also asks Neptune for a calm sea. As in the classical versions, she wavers between urging Leander not to set out and to come anyway, hoping for the help of Venus. Leander, meanwhile, although aware of the *horrible tempeste* (p. 63), nevertheless feels that “Lesperence du bien surpasse le danger” (p. 64, the hope of good surpasses the danger). He voices a version of the Martial epigram and these are his last words. Hero meanwhile has had the Ovidian dream of the cast-up dolphin and rightly interprets it as the death of Leander, at which she goes to the top of her tower, much to the agitation of Lisene. It is not clear precisely why Leander drowned — we may presume that it was simply the force of the storm — but now Hero curses the torch, the *feu malheureux* (p. 69), and with the words “Regarde s’il est vray qu’Heron ayme Leandre” (p. 69, see it if it true that Hero loves Leander), she throws herself down. Her last act is reported by Lisene. The final scenes show us Doris and Acanthe, glad to be alive, with the former satisfied that the gods have avenged her, but subdued nevertheless. The last words of the play are given to Lisene, who will arrange for the lovers to be buried in one tomb and have a monument erected to them.

Bibliographic chance has ensured that there is only one copy of the work, but de la Selve’s play does not necessarily fall into the category of justly forgotten versions. It adds material but differs nevertheless from the plays by Bracciolini or Stapylton. While clearly neo-classical in its use of Ovid, it is also in line with seventeenth-century French questionings of the nature of love, something which preoccupies Leander himself, in the abstract, and in his relationship with Doris. Other works introduce rivals for the love of Leander or of Hero; but permitting Leander an even temporarily reciprocated relationship is an interesting variation, especially as we are allowed to see into his mind when he regrets his treatment of Doris. Different aspects of the psychology of love are explored here, but the basic tragedy remains intact. Love is an external and violent, indeed negative, force which Leander is unable to escape, and his opening line, “Que ie trouve charmant le plaisir de l’Amour” (p. 1, how delightful I find the joys of love) is ironic. The action demonstrates that love is not what he takes it to be, that the questions are harder than he thought. The structure of the work is not without interest — the role of Leander’s servant is limited, but he is central to the plot-development. The gods are still with us and apparently active: not just the all-powerful *Amour*, Eros, but Neptune, whose direct support of Doris provides for the storm. Venus (Cypris) is of no help at all, although perhaps she is angry with her supposed priestess.

5 Robert Stapylton, *The Tragedie of Hero and Leander* (1669)

Sir Robert Stapylton (Stapleton), who died in 1669, translated Musaios, and his play (in iambic pentameters with rhymed couplets at end-points) goes even further than Bracciolini had done by placing the “old Poet” Musaios not just on stage but in the plot itself, in the somewhat implausible role of an Athenian vice-admiral. Stapylton allows Musaios to declare his intention of writing his poem after he hears of the tragedy, although in the play he himself is only marginally involved with it.¹⁶ As with Bracciolini, this Musaios is again intended presumably not as the Grammarian, but his more shadowy earlier namesake. Stapylton also outdoes both Mira de Amescua and Bracciolini in terms of additional characters (including relatives and suitors) and of plot.

Stapylton's life and career were colourful, as he shifted from Benedictine monk to Protestant courtier with Charles I, withdrew during the Commonwealth, and then re-emerged after the Restoration as a Gentleman Usher to the Privy Chamber for Charles II, by whom his work was apparently “very much esteemed”.¹⁷ Royal taste notwithstanding, however, Stapylton's play is not unjustly forgotten. The story is much augmented, and not very much is from Musaios (notwithstanding his cameo appearance) beyond the role of Hero as a priestess, and even that is somewhat modified. Ovid has contributed rather more, though the use of the *Heroides* is erratic at best. Stapylton's additional plots and characters mean that the actual tale of Hero and Leander almost disappears under the weight of new material, which centres on Hero's sister Theamne, who is altogether more lively and forceful. A brother, Orosis, is provided for Leander, and since Abydos is in the Troad, which was supposed to have been under Trojan rule, they are both Trojan princes. Sestos, Athens (and indeed Persia) all figure as political entities.

Orosis falls in love with Theamne, who is herself promised to an Athenian admiral named Mentor. Hero is promised to her cousin Arcas after she has served one year as a priestess, which seems here to be a fixed-term appointment. Hero and Theamne have a brother, Samertes, who falls in love — one is tempted to say predictably — with Leander's sister Celena, as does, however, Mentor. The net result is something between an adventure story which

16 Robert Stapylton, Kt., *The Tragedie of Hero and Leander* (London: Thomas Dring, 1669). The prologue and *dramatis personae* — which omits Arcas, Tiresias's nephew and Hero's cousin — and the epilogue are all unpaginated. It is available online in the Michigan Early English Books project. His Musaios translation appeared in 1645 and 1647.

17 Thus *The Poetical Register* (London: Bettesworth, etc., 1723), I, 248. It notes the dedication of his Hero and Leander to the Duchess of Monmouth, and gives Ovid's Epistles (that is, the *Heroides*) and Musaios as the source.

partly replays the Trojan War, and an opera (or possibly a soap-opera), as characters rapidly fall in love with each other in various permutations. The tale of Hero and Leander survives amidst all this only as a slightly awkward sub-plot. Leander does swim the Hellespont, it is true, but this time he is hampered not only by the weather and the gods, but by the presence of the entire Athenian war-fleet and sundry Trojan vessels. One of these, in fact, delivers a letter to Hero, but where in the *Heroides* an unspecified boatman is delivering a love-letter because Leander is unable to swim across, Stapylton's equivalent letter enlists Hero's help in letting the (Trojan) men of Abydos into Sestos.

A prologue has a dig at Jonson, whose puppet Hero and Leander turned love and honour into burlesque, while Leander is really a model for "all those men who bravely dare." Any comedy found in Stapylton's play, then, is unintentional. It opens with the festival of Venus and Adonis at Sestos and the arrival of the Trojan princes Leander and Orosis and their crew. Leander is a somewhat aloof warrior, but the action centres from the start upon Orosis and his attraction to Theamne, whom he sees in a pageant representing Venus (her brother, Samertes, plays Adonis). After some hesitation, Leander agrees to help him win her.

Hero's background is then established. Her father, the magistrate Tiresias permits Arcas, her cousin, to court her after she has completed her statutory year as priestess, and we hear too that Theamne is to marry Mentor, the Athenian admiral, who is for the first two acts prevented by heavy seas from landing. The reluctant Theamne is not unhappy about this delay; she has never met Mentor, but she finds his portrait unattractive. Hero, meanwhile, assures their nurse that she herself will never marry: "Free was I born, why should I not live Free?", she asks, seeing marriage — in an interesting anticipation of Grillparzer's Hero — as "perpetual bondage" (p. 7), and even asking the goddess to preserve her from the nuptial bed. At the end of the act, however, Leander sees Hero and declares his love, although she resists and says that her parents must decide. Orosis says to Leander that he will speak for them both.

The second act develops the Theamne-plot, as she agrees a plan with her and Hero's (ever proactive) nurse to hide in Hero's tower to escape from the marriage to Mentor. An encounter with Orosis seals their relationship, and Orosis now presents himself at a feast being held by Tiresias. A fight almost breaks out amongst the various young men, but Tiresias stops it when Theamne herself declares that she loves Mentor and ostensibly rejects Orosis. She is, however, "a cunning cheat", claiming (not very poetically) that "I'll play my Cards as subtly as I can, / To get a Prince, and scape an ugly Man" (p. 15). Leander's crew is ready to take Theamne away. After initial resistance Hero has given way to her love for Leander, who will swim the Hellespont to reach her when she sets up a

light to guide him. "These arms shall row me," (p. 17) is another classical echo, but it is not clear why he has to swim at all, given the amount of traffic in the Hellespont during the action anyway.

The third act opens in Abydos, where Leander is being oiled ready to swim. Another new character, his sister Celena, approves of the enterprise. Orosis and Theamne have returned with him to Abydos, having apparently fought on land with the Sestians (Arcas was wounded), but there will now be a sea-battle, with Mentor, Theamne's admiral, leading his Greek fleet. We hear in passing, however, that Mentor may have a more sensitive nature than some of the warriors, and his deputy, Musaeus, certainly wants to avoid war: "the Vice-Admiral, that damn'd Poet,/ (Who has with Poetry infected *Mentor*)/ *Musaeus* Voted for a Peace ..." (p. 20). Nevertheless, the others are determined to raze Abydos.

Hero has set her torch on the tower and the nurse ensures that it does not go out, though Hero exhibits the customary indecision about whether Leander should come or not. The nurse also wants to warn him of the plans of Mentor to attack Abydos. Leander swims to Hero as "Pilot, Ship and Oar", and arrives burning with love, but the scene swiftly returns to Abydos and the complicated Theamne-plot, a summary of which conveys the flavour (if not the logic) of the work. The garrison at Abydos surrenders to Mentor, who arrives with Samertes and Arcas ready to kill Theamne and Orosis. The ever-resourceful Theamne persuades them that she really loves Mentor, and one after another all three warriors forgive Orosis. Samertes falls in love with Celena, but Mentor is equally attracted to her. Theamne is given the right to decide the fate of Orosis and Celena, who are eventually taken from Mentor's custody back to Sestos, although Mentor is reluctant to lose Celena. He is determined to act honourably, however.

All this complexity, none of which has anything to do with Hero and Leander, is continued in the fourth act, at the start of which we do get another glimpse of Leander, who has arrived back in Abydos, having managed to avoid the Greek fleet as he swam. He now plans to send a letter to his "Wife" to have her unlock the portal in Sestos (a plot less elaborate than the wooden horse, but at least Trojan) before Leander arrives, which he promises to do that night. That it is to be delivered by the Abydan seaman Stredon and his crew in black-face disguise as Ethiopian dancers underlines again the less than classical tone of the work.

Back in Sestos, Theamne now pretends to decide the fate of Orosis and Celena. Samertes wants Celena saved, of course, whilst Mentor himself is sick with love for her. Awaiting Leander, Hero is worried (as in Ovid) that he might have a mistress in Asia, and decides (somewhat obscurely) to write to him.

However, the apparently completely effectively disguised Stredon and his crew arrive and dance, before washing in a fountain and revealing, as it were, their true colours. The letter is read out, and Ovid's *epistula* (which in the tradition goes through more than one metamorphosis of its own) has this time become a prose plot-device. Hero learns where Orosis and Theamne are, that Leander will swim again at midnight, and that she is to give Stredon the keys to the citadel. She will that night hold up her mantle to shield from the winds the flame which will light Leander's way.

At the start of the final act, Leander cannot be dissuaded from swimming although the sea is now very stormy, because he has given his word in the letter. It is never very clear why he does not simply go with the Trojan fleet, which is to follow and free Celena and Orosis. Back in Sestos, however, Mentor and Musaeus go to Hero's tower looking for Celena, but we gather that Mentor must return with his fleet to fight the Persians, and that his country must come before his love. The titular narrative of Hero and Leander is now disposed of in short order. We hear that the torch has been extinguished, and a little later Mentor and Musaeus, hiding from the invading Trojans, overhear casually that Leander has been drowned and that Hero has thrown herself into the sea. This enables Staphylton to clear up the classical narrative once and for all when Musaeus rather opportunistically declares:

I'll make all Mankind their sad Fate deplore,
The wildest Savage when my verse he hears,
Shall once more drown them in a sea of tears. (p. 39)

The Trojans have entered Sestos, followed by Mentor, all prepared to fight for Celena. Theamne, meanwhile, claiming the right of judgement, spares the lives of Celena and Orosis, and the assumption is that Celena will marry Samertes. Mentor, however, now takes charge, and in the thoroughly operatic happy-ending Celena agrees to marry Mentor, whose nobility patently trumps his looks. Samertes and Arcas will go and fight beside him against the Persians, and Theamne and Orosis are united. Only at the very end there is a brief recalling of Hero and Leander, when it is said of Musaeus that "He to the World a Poem will present/ For Hero and Leander's MONUMENT" (p. 43).

Insofar as Staphylton's play is about Hero and Leander at all, the impetus for the composition of Musaios's work seems important, but the play might better be called "Theamne and Orosis". The expectations aroused by the title are not fulfilled, although to be fair, the audience knows what is going to happen with Hero and Leander in any case, while the behaviour of their siblings is a

theatrical novelty. No real answers are provided to some of the open questions about the classical narrative, and the writing of letters to each other (and even the swimming) is a little absurd.

The fact of the Hero and Leander poem seems more important than their actual lives and deaths, but Staphylton makes an interesting final comment on the whole story in his epilogue, indicating his regret that the story actually *is* a tragic one, and reminding us that the pair do live on in literature. But he either demands applause (and a curtain-call), or perhaps makes a theatrical plea for a longer run than the play manifestly deserved:

IF The Original had not restrain'd
The Copy; if our Poet might have feign'd;
The Sea should have consented to restore,
His *Hero* and *Leander* safe to Shoar.
But what a Poet cannot do, You may;
They'll live to Morrow if You like the Play.

6 Jean-Pierre Claris de Florian, *Héro et Léandre* (1784)

The passing of more than a century brings us to a very different approach to the narrative: to romantic psychology, rather than the expanded action seen in the plays by Bracciolini, Mira de Amescua, de la Selve, and Staphylton. Jean-Pierre de Florian (1755–94), a dramatist interested in pastoral themes, wrote his *monologue lyrique* as a prose piece spoken by Hero alone, although we do catch a brief glimpse of Leander. It was performed in Paris on 23 September 1784 and printed and reprinted many times.¹⁸ Although it has a cast of one, it is nevertheless a theatrical production, with detailed stage-directions, and it would have demanded a great deal from a solo performer in portraying Hero's shifting emotions as she waits for Leander on the fatal last night. It owes much to Ovid, predictably, since the *Heroides* are in effect dramatic monologues and

18 Jean-Pierre Claris de Florian, *Héro et Léandre* (Paris: Cailleau, 1785); *Théâtre Italien de M. de Florian* (Paris: Didot, 1784), II, 85–99; *Oeuvres complètes de Florian* (Leipzig: Fleischer, 1826), III, 209–215 and others. Most are online, and there is a good, annotated edition by Ernest Gwénola and Paul Fièvre at: theatre-classique.fr/pages/pdf/FLORIAN_HEROLEANDRE.pdf (December 2014). This is cited by page. Why they give the date 1788 is unclear, however. The dramatic monologue *Ero* by Antonio Filistri da Caramondani, known in a printed text of 1807, compares well with Florian's monodrama, but seems to have been (at least mainly) a musical performance, and accordingly is considered in that context.

Hero Leandro could, of course, have been written when Leander had already decided to swim. The focus here is upon her wavering as to whether he should or should not come, and whether she has been premature in lighting the torch. Hero's attitude towards the gods — who do not appear — and her final outpouring of anger against them is echoed in later drama.

The setting is the shore of the Hellespont, with “une tour isolée, sur le haut de laquelle est un fanal allumé” (p. 5, a solitary tower, at the top of which is a lit beacon). It is night, and there is a moon, apostrophised as Phoebe. The sea is calm, and Hero states that the beacon will guide Leander, but still “un terreur secrète se glisse malgré moi dans mon sein” (p. 5, a secret terror slips in spite of myself into my breast). She first implores Leander not to come, recalling that Helle herself had drowned there, but in the conflict of desire to see him and the fear of Leander's taking any risks, she simply encourages him to make haste to leave the dangerous sea, the perfidious element: “Hâte-toi de sortir de cet élément perfide” (p. 6). Her torch is *ton seul astre* (p. 6, your only star). Then she convinces herself that Leander will *not* come, but at once returns to her attentive vigil, angry that they cannot always be united. Leander has never been so late, so perhaps he did not set out? Now however, a storm begins, and Hero, now fearful, urges Leander to turn back while he can. The storm gains in force and she appeals to the gods:

Ô Neptune, ô Borée, apaisez vous, épargnez-le! Il ne vous offensa jamais;
un jour n'a jamais fini sans qu'il vous ait adressé des vœux (p. 7)

(O Neptune, O Boreas, be calm, spare him. He has never offended you. There was never a day ended without his having addressed you with his devotions).

That same speech refers to Philyra, loved by Kronos, and Oreithyia, one of the loves of Boreas. Leander refers in his Ovidian letter to Boreas's loves, but here the names, though impressive, are obscure. The storm, a stage-direction tells us, abates, and Hero rejoices that Neptune has heard her plea, only to begin to doubt once more. Now, however, “dawn rises, and a new day is born”. Hero makes the point that Leander does not come to her in the daytime, and that normally this is when he leaves her; but this time she will keep him with her and the dawn will be her benefactress. It is, of course, not to be, and the stage directions now call for Leander to be visible in the distance, apparently fighting with the waves. “Il semble lutter contre les flots”, says Hero, but as she urges him on he disappears. There is a long pause and then comes her realisation: “Il est mort pour moi. C'est moi, c'est moi qui l'assassine!” (p. 8, he died for me. It is

I, it is I who murder him). The motif is again a very familiar one, but she curses the *dieux barbares*, the barbaric gods (p. 8) who gave her hope just to make the suffering more acute — a point that is made by other writers. The ending has her deciding to search for him even in the underworld, with a sententious final declaration: “Qui sait aimer sait mourir; et cette mort est un doux moment, puisqu’elle me réunit à Léandre” (p. 8, If you know how to love, you know how to die; and this death is a sweet moment, because it reunites me with Leander). Her suicide ends the play.

The dramatic set-piece is a show-case of emotions. The gods are invoked, but it is the sea which kills Leander after a whole night’s struggle, and the gods are not much more than a reflection of her reactions to the blows of fate. Her anger at the duplicity of the gods (rather than their control of the sea) puts a construct upon her own suffering and the forces of nature. In most versions, dawn needs to have broken so that Hero can find Leander’s body, but here his death is apparently shown, at least as a kind of *teichoscopy*. Hero has said that Leander usually leaves her at dawn. This time it is forever.

7 Ferdinand Kämmerer, *Hero und Leander ... frei nach Florian bearbeitet* (1802)

Ferdinand Kämmerer (1784–1841) composed in 1802 what he correctly refers to as a “free adaptation” of Florian’s monodrama.¹⁹ It is recast in verse, using various metres and modified somewhat, losing, for example, the final curse at the apparent malice of the gods, and adding other elements. It is unclear where or whether this was performed, but one can imagine it as a vehicle for an emotional and declamatory amateur performance in a middle-class German drawing room in the early nineteenth century.

The scene is not the tower, but the temple of Venus, although the light (this time a lamp) is still there and the moon is Selene, rather than Phoebe. The use of verse allows for a more florid and sententious tone from the outset:

Ueber alle Wesen hat die Nacht
Ihren Schleier ausgebreitet.
Nur die treue Liebe wacht,
Die durch Sturm und Wogen leitet. (p. 79)

19 Ferdinand Kämmerer, *Hero und Leander ... frei nach Florian bearbeitet* (1802), in his *Poetische Versuche und Uebersetzungen* (Darmstadt: Stahl, 1813), I, 79–86.

(Night has spread out her veil over all things; only true love, which leads the way through storm and waves, is awake.)

Some of the feelings expressed by Florian's Hero are exactly imitated: a strange anxiety fills her, and she urges Leander to hurry to escape as soon as he can *dem falschen Meer* (from the treacherous sea, p. 80, *perfidie* in Florian). So, too, she appeals to the gods, but her somewhat florid address to the lamp and its shimmering gold, leading Leander to his bride, is new, as are some of her anxieties (from Ovid) about his possible reasons for not appearing.

The storm rises, and as she prays to the gods for aid, in a new and ironic element she offers her own blood in sacrifice if Leander is saved. She does not mention the classical lovers named by Florian, but invokes Àolus, god of the winds, in place of Boreas. Hero refers here to Neptune, ruler of the waves as *Ennosichthon*, Enosikhthon, 'earthshaker', one of the names for Poseidon/Neptune, not entirely appropriate here, and surely a difficult reference even for a classically educated age, although it does make for a sonorously rhythmic line: "Ennosichthon, Herrscher der gewalt'gen Flut" (p. 83, Enosikhthon, who rules the pow'rful waves).

The storm abates, and she thanks the gods, but when morning comes, Kämmerer's Hero does not, as Florian's did, make the point that this is usually when Leander leaves. Here she simply sees him, and thanks the gods once more that she will never let him go again. The ending is somewhat curtailed. We see him in the distance — the stage directions are maintained — as he struggles, and Hero sees that he does so in vain. She despairs, but the accusation in Florian of divine duplicity is absent, and she says with resignation that they will meet again in the other world: "Wohl, wir finden uns dort!" (p. 86, very well, we'll meet again in that place). Her final address is to the waves of the Hellespont:

Ihr habt den Geliebten verschlungen,
Ihr habt das Brautlied gesungen,
Ha! nehmet Fluten mich auf! (p. 86)

(You have swallowed up the beloved, you have sung the epithalamium, now, waves, take me!)

The references to *Braut* earlier, and now to a *Brautlied* — bride, bridal song — might perhaps imply here that we are intended to see this as the first and last time that he swam to her, which may account for the loss of the explanatory reference to his regular departure at dawn. We have moved from the Paris stage

to a more respectable early Biedermeier (salon?) presentation of love and loss, without lust and without much of the gods, but with the hope of a respectable marriage in the afterlife.

8 Alois Joseph Büssel, *Hero und Leandros* (1822)

Aloys or Alois Joseph Büssel (1789–1842) was born in Salzburg in Austria, but worked for the Bavarian civil service, and his drama *Hero und Leandros* was published in 1822, at around the same time as Grillparzer was beginning work on the great neo-classical play which would eclipse it entirely a decade later.²⁰ Despite the cultural closeness, and the fact that Büssel did produce a competent blank verse drama on the same theme as *Des Meeres und der Liebe Wellen*, his name is almost never mentioned in studies of Grillparzer, nor indeed in most literary histories of German. Jellinek, one of the few critics to discuss Büssel at all, gives no indication of whether Grillparzer knew his work, although he clearly did. Jellinek does offer a critical summary of the play but he plainly considered any reading of Büssel to be of value principally to enhance the appreciation of Grillparzer's work. He draws attention to links with Schiller's ballad and with dramatic scenes in his *Don Carlos*, but overall he is dismissive of the way in which he claims Büssel cobbles together (*zusammenleimt*) traditional and invented elements to fill in the narrative gaps. His final comment, that Büssel's play is *manierirt antikisirend*, mannered in its striving for classical feeling, might not be unfair, but the implicit criticism of Büssel's use of the name-form *Leandros* should be set against Grillparzer's choice of what he himself said was a deliberately precious-sounding title for his own 'waves of the sea and of love'. On the other hand, Jellinek's criticism that Büssel "misunderstood Musaios" is less than useful, since this could be levelled at almost any variation in any version. Jellinek's final contention that Büssel has produced a dialogue poem rather than a play seems at first glance to be a fair comment, since the work opens only after the crucial initial encounter between the lovers has already taken place. Later, however, there is far more action, and if some of it is less than convincing, such as a scene in which Leander barely escapes from Hero's vengeful father; Büssel also tackles some of the inherent problems in the narrative. It is worth noting, too, that equal weight is given to each of the principal characters. Jellinek's dismissal of Büssel

20 Aloys Joseph Büssel, *Hero und Leandros. Ein Trauerspiel in fünf Acten* (Bamberg und Würzburg: Goebhardt, 1822). Page references are to this edition (online and as an on-demand reprint). I use the name Leander rather than Büssel's Leandros.

rests largely on the indisputable fact that Grillparzer's work is better, but there is much of interest in Büssel's forgotten work, and not just as a precursor and in small measure a source for Grillparzer. It would be difficult to make a case for restoring it or its author to the literary mainstream (there are some obvious motivational flaws), but it cannot be dismissed out of hand.²¹

One critic who *did* link Büssel's play with that by Grillparzer was John L. Kind, who published in 1916 an edition of Grillparzer's *Des Meeres und der Liebe Wellen*, with an introduction of more than 130 pages, including a discussion of Grillparzer's sources. Although Kind concurs with Jellinek's rather harsh judgement that Büssel's play is "a miserable patchwork of motifs taken from Musaeus and Schiller" (neither critic comments much on Büssel's considerable debt to Ovid), he does consider, certainly correctly, that Büssel's play suggested a number of ideas to Grillparzer, including the provision of a loyal friend for Leander and a young confidante for Hero, as well as the distinction between Aphrodite Cnydia and Aphrodite Urania, even if Büssel does not develop the point as fully. We may add further links, such as the role of Hero's brother (off-stage in both plays), the use of the image of the net, Hero's sudden invitation to Leander, and that the last line of the play is given to Hero's confidante. The two works, however, are quite different in most respects, and if Grillparzer borrowed, he also adapted.²²

Büssel's published work is prefaced by a poem announcing that the writer was inspired by the Hellespont to take up again the famous and ancient love-story because love is the source for all poetry, even though — a significant comment for the times — the gods have long since been banished from Olympus. The work is dedicated to an actor, Ferdinand Johan Baptist Eßlair (1772–1840), who performed in Germany and Austria in the tragic roles of Weimar classicism, and whom Goethe mentions more than once. The cast contains, beside the two major characters (Hero is a priestess and the story behind this is developed), the fathers of Hero and of Leander, Chrysandros and Aimnestos, as well as Ariston, a friend of the latter, living in Sestos. Two further characters, Leander's close friend Klymenos, and Hero's confidante Aidusa certainly seem to have been an inspiration for Grillparzer's Naukleros and Ianthe. Jellinek notes that the missing motivation for the separation of the lovers is sometimes explained by Hero's role as a priestess, and at others by the idea that the sets of

21 Jellinek, *Sage*, pp. 62–7. Jellinek claimed that Büssel follows Schiller and Musaios, his main sources, "slavishly", although this is hardly accurate. He notes, p. 65, one echo of Ovid.

22 John L. Kind (ed.), *Des Meeres und der Liebe Wellen ... von Franz Grillparzer* (New York: OUP, 1916), pp. cxxii.

parents are enemies, and he is dismissive of Büssel for using both priesthood and family enmity.²³ Büssel in fact merges the two, but not only does he add a family reason behind Hero's role — Grillparzer does exactly the same — but he invents a complex conflict between the two fathers which goes well beyond the hints in Ovid, and this does indeed lead him to gild the lily somewhat.

The first act is noteworthy for what it does *not* show. It is already the end of the feast of Aphrodite in Sestos, and Leander tells us that he had prayed for a love and has found one, but that she is a priestess. The first encounter between the lovers, the love at first sight, is therefore only referred to, rather than depicted (as of course in Ovid). When his friend Klymenos approaches, Leander tells him “Dich umstricken nicht/ Die gold'nen Netze, von der Göttin Hand/ Dem Liebenden gesponnen um die Brust (p. 6, You are not trapped in the golden nets that the goddess spins around a lover's breast), an image that recurs in Grillparzer, just as Klymenos matches Grillparzer's Naukleros in tone and in function. Leander says that he is in love, but that the love is impossible because Hero is the priestess. Klymenos explains to him and to us that this is the result of a vow by her parents that if their son were to return victorious from a battle, then she should be dedicated. The explanation is ingenious: because of her parents, and more specifically of her brother she is now, regardless of her own feelings, denied the possibility of love.²⁴ Grillparzer's Hero has a bullying brother, to escape from whom she herself flees to the temple.

Further, Hero is not the priestess of the Cnidian Aphrodite and of earthly love, but of Aphrodite Urania. This point, perhaps based on Plato's *Symposium*, pre-empts the argument used by Leander elsewhere that the goddess of love should approve of their liaison. Grillparzer uses the same device, though in neither play does either of the principal characters take much notice. Leander is resolute and will remain in Sestos because he has seen in Hero's eyes that she is equally smitten — again we have a description, rather than a presentation of a crucial part of the narrative — but Hero's confidante Aidusa gives him flowers from Hero as a token of love.

In the second act, still in Sestos, Ariston presents the case to Hero's father, Chrysandros, who rejects it out of hand, even when told “Die Liebe ist des Menschen höchstes Glück” (p. 29, love is the greatest happiness of mankind), and that his daughter should not be denied it. In spite of this, Leander remains confident in the power of love, although Klymenos thinks that he should give

23 Jellinek also notes that prophecies are sometimes made about their fate, and mentions Hoh(en)berg in this context; Colijn van Rijssel has the motif in his rather earlier Flemish play, and others use it as well.

24 Jellinek does not mention the role of the brother, which seems to offer a crucial justification for Leander's wooing of Hero.

Hero up, and himself returns to Abydos, asking the goddess Kypris, Aphrodite, to protect Leander. In the next scene Hero analyses to Aidusa her feelings for Leander, angry that she has been sacrificed for the sake of her brother:

Ich soll
Verschmachten gattenlos? Das höchste Glück
Soll ich entbehren? Nein! Entsagen ist
Nicht Aphrodites heiliges Gesetz! (p. 41f.)

(Am I to pine without a husband? Am I to relinquish the greatest happiness? No! Denial is not Aphrodite's holy law!)

She does not seem to grasp the distinction between the two Aphrodites, although she is aware, with an image which becomes increasingly ominous, that "Eros webt geheime Netze" (p. 44, Eros weaves secret nets). The young companion Aidusa echoes the idea that Eros brings only sorrow and hopes that she herself will remain preserved from his darts, and in this she strongly pre-echoes Grillparzer's *lanthe*.

The central act brings the main characters together on stage for the first time. It is night, and in the temple Leander is praying to Kypris, and sees Hero, whom he thinks of as a goddess. This linking of Hero with Aphrodite — the familiar *ipsa dea est* — is picked up by Hero herself later as hubris. Hero urges Leander to leave, fearing her father (she refers prophetically to his use of a dagger at one point), but Leander persists ("Laß uns verschmelzen unsre trunknen Geister", p. 51, Let our intoxicated spirits melt into one another) until dawn comes. Hero again tells him to flee, but he calls her cruel, and then suddenly she invites him to follow her to her chamber: "So folge, schöner Jüngling, in's Gemach" (p. 53), a sudden turn that is again matched in Grillparzer's later play when Hero, also accused of cruel behaviour by Leander, suddenly tells him: "komm Morgen denn", come tomorrow.

Aidusa, who has been concerned about Hero's absence, warns them that Hero's father knows their secret, and she is sent to keep a look-out. Leander still trusts in the goddess, but Hero remains fearful of her father's vengeance. Leander assures her that his own father is powerful and once had a close friend in Sestos, but the arrangement is made that Leander will swim to her tower, and that she will set up a torch. When he leaves, Hero is angry that fate did not bring Leander "Als ich noch frei" (p. 63, when I was still free), another motif picked up by Grillparzer.

The final part of the act develops Büssel's new material. Chrysandos reveals to Ariston that he and Aimnestos, Leander's father, are enemies, although they were once friends. In a very elaborate development of the hints at parental

disapproval in the *Heroides*, and now using the tale of Eteocles and Polynices, we hear that the two men had wanted to unite Abydos and Sestos and rule it together, but that Aimnestos had wanted sole power. Chrysandos had objected, and they swore a curse on each other.²⁵ Leander is left in despair.

This is reinforced in the fourth act, when, back in Abydos, Leander hears the story from his father. Reconciliation seems impossible (“Er kann mir nicht vergeben”, he cannot forgive me, p. 73). Each father blames the other for the impasse, and when he hears that Chrysandos has rejected Leander, Aimnestos declares: “Drum sey’s! Er weigre seine Tochter ihm!/ Ich weigre die Versöhnung — und den Sohn! (p. 75, So be it! If he denies him his daughter, I deny him reconciliation — and my son!). Leander, however, has already said that he will die in pursuit of the most divine of women (the links with the goddess is a recurrent motif), and now swims to Sestos. This is not simply a drama for reading. The production would have required some inventiveness, but the stage-direction reads: “Er springt in das Meer. Die Musik fällt ein, und begleitet ihn eine geraume Pause, bis er dem Auge des Zuschauers verschwindet” (p. 76, He jumps into the sea. Music starts and goes on for a length of time until he disappears from the view of the audience).

Hero awaits him, confident to the point of hubris: “Hero! Du bist Aphrodite nun selbst!” (p. 77, Hero, you are now Aphrodite herself). Leander arrives and gives the details of the feud between the fathers, but what is more noticeable in this scene is the strong awareness on both their parts of the possibility of death. “Dem Leben nicht gehören wir mehr an,” says Hero, we no longer belong to this life (p. 81). The final scenes of the act, however, take the narrative in a new direction. Chrysandros dreams that the two are together, seizes his dagger and goes to investigate. Leander is about to leave, promising to return that night, when Aidusa shouts a warning as Chrysandros arrives. Hero conceals Leander with her cloak, telling her father that no armed man is allowed near her. Her father then hurls his dagger into the sea as a sign of his curse on anyone who approaches Hero. This melodramatic scene belongs to, and perhaps might even identify the play as a *Schicksalstragödie*, the German fate-tragedy, a genre popular in the early nineteenth century which typically foregrounded actions of this sort as concrete manifestations of fate. Often a dagger is involved, although this time it is given to the Hellespont, which does indeed kill Leander.²⁶

25 Jellinek, *Sage*, p. 64, is particularly scornful of the way this exposition is brought out. He refers to Eteocles and Polynices, and it may be recalled that those two brothers ultimately kill each other (Aeschylus, *Seven Against Thebes*).

26 Melodrama is never comfortable, and the various examples in German of the fate-tragedy are largely forgotten, or not taken very seriously, although Grillparzer himself produced one in his early play *Die Ahnfrau*, the ancestress. August von Platen wrote a nice parody of

The final act sees Hero alone in her tower waiting for the night. She instructs Aidusa, to whom she is now very close, to light the torch, and invokes Helle in a hymn to the flame. Back in Abydos, Klymenos tries to dissuade Leander (as Naukleros does in Grillparzer), but Leander is adamant that love fears nothing. As a parallel he invokes Orpheus, who went unafraid to rescue his love, and courage is clearly the main idea here, since Leander is aware that Orpheus failed in his attempt. He sets off towards the torchlight — “Du schaurig schönes Roth des Liebes-Fackel” (p. 100, O red of love's torch, fearful and beautiful). The storm increases, with thunder and lightning, and the next scene has Hero waking up in her tower and thinking that the thunder is Leander's knock at the door. She sends Aidusa to see if the torch is still burning while she prays to Aphrodite, but Aidusa returns to say that it has been extinguished by the storm, which has wrecked ships in the harbour. Aidusa tries to comfort Hero, but the latter is now quite sure that Leander is dead, and at dawn they see that Leukothea, the white goddess, the deity of the foam associated with the Hellespont, has taken him. Aidusa exclaims “Ihr ungerechte Götter”, you unjust gods, (p. 107), but Hero has understood that the gods, the *ernste Mächte*, solemn powers, are envious of human happiness, and — almost in an echo of the sin attributed to Adam and Eve — do not wish humans to try to be like gods:

Den Sterblichen habt Ihr das Glück geneidet,
 Das sie im Wonnetaumel Euch hat gleich
 Gestellt! Das ist das Loos der Sterblichen,
 Erreichten sie des Lebens Blumengipfel;
 Die Götter treiben ihre Rechte ein
 Für den Genuß durch Tod und Untergang! (p. 107f.)

(You envied mortals their happiness which, in the turmoil of delight made them your equals. That is the fate of mortals when they attain to the highest point of joyful life; the gods then exercise their rights over that enjoyment, by death and decline).

Resigned, then, to the brevity of love and happiness, she offers herself to the white goddess as a sacrifice, and to join her lover. Aidusa has the last line: “Leukothea! Auch sie nimmst Du zu Dir!” (p. 108, Leukothea! You are taking her as well).

the genre called *Die verhängnisvolle Gabel*, the fateful fork, in which a culinary alternative to the ubiquitous knife is involved in the demise of a large number of people.

Büssel is concerned to fill in some of the narrative gaps. Hero is a priestess because of her brother, an unusual invention which justifies her rebellion, if it does not exonerate her. In his attempt to make clear the reasons behind the need for secrecy in the love affair, Büssel has combined Ovid with Musaios and made some additions of his own, which may or may not be felt to have worked, such as the historical power-struggle between the two fathers, a complicated and melodramatic addition which shifts the play from classical drama into the nineteenth-century German *Schicksalstragödie*. Jellinek suggested that the sole value of reading Büssel was better to appreciate Grillparzer, but it is important to consider this play *without* reference to Grillparzer. The awareness of the possibility of death throughout the development of the love is well done, and the envy of the gods for, and the desire to keep to themselves the greatest of all emotions, love, is the overriding theme. There is no happy after-life, and Hero's final resignation is not accompanied by an overdone farewell monologue. As early as 1840, Joseph Kehrein wrote in a history of German drama that in Büssel's play the catastrophe is mishandled,²⁷ but this is not entirely true in the sustained indictment of the envy of the gods.

9 Conclusion

With a chronological range extending from a fifteenth- or sixteenth-century *rederijker* play with echoes of medieval traditions, through a series of renaissance and baroque plays down to romantic celebrations of the tragedy of a great love, it is hardly surprising that the works discussed in this chapter are not homogeneous in their reception of the story. There is also a considerable variation in quality, comparing Stapylton with, say, Florian or even Büssel. For all of these plays, however, not only are there difficulties of presentation in a plot which involves swimming the Hellespont, but a clear necessity, even in those with a more psychological approach, for expansion of the limited set of constants to answer some of the standard questions. The earlier dramas — Bracciolini, Mira de Amescua, de la Selve, Stapylton — not only fill in the gaps in the basic narrative, but augment it with complex additional plots, which can intensify the love between Hero and Leander by providing alternative rejected suitors, or which can function simple as sideshows — the role of Mitilene in Amescua's play is an example of embroidery on the in any case unwavering love of Leander for Hero. The additional material may be peripheral (as in

27 "[Hier] ist die Katastrophe verfehlt": Joseph Kehrein, *Die dramatische Poesie der Deutschen* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1840), II, 204.

Amescua), but it can also overwhelm (as in Stapylton); and it can even lead to a revision of the plot as such, as when Bracciolini makes Musaios himself (even if not the right one) change his mind entirely about the whole thing.

The augmented (and exaggerated) plots eventually give way to dramas which occupy themselves more intensively with the internal psychology of the characters, although they can still ask questions, apportion blame, and interpret the supposed motives of the gods. This questioning and psychological approach is already apparent, at least to a small extent, in the work of François de la Selve, which, while it also introduces new characters, is concerned with the nature of love itself (and indeed, thoughts and emotions are made into external figures already in the *rederijker* play). The monodrama provides an obvious contrast to the full casts provided elsewhere. The psychology of the principals, a concentration on the basic narrative with reference to human blame, a reduced and secondary-interpretative role for the gods (who by the nineteenth century have disappeared from Olympus), all become the major features. This process will culminate in the greatest of the dramas on the theme, that by Grillparzer.

The Waves of Sea and Love: Grillparzer and After

Versprichst du viel, und hältst du also Wort?



Büßel's fate-tragedy of 1822 leads us directly to one of the high points in the reception of the tale, another drama in German less than a decade later by the Austrian Franz Grillparzer. His work, with its memorable title, *Des Meeres und der Liebe Wellen*, the waves of the sea and of love, remains a neo-classical masterpiece which proves that the narrative is capable of dramatization at the highest level, even if Grillparzer himself was never entirely satisfied with the results. Having sketched the theme in a diary entry in 1820 and agonised over its progress in subsequent years, he watched the finished play being given a mixed reception at its first performance in 1831 and was still referring to its "compositional weaknesses" in 1853. For all that, it remains in the repertoire as one of his most-performed plays. Several operas and later dramas were based on or influenced by it, including a play by Martin Schütze, who had as a German scholar also edited Grillparzer's work.

1 Franz Grillparzer, *Des Meeres und der Liebe Wellen* (1831)

In the first part of the nineteenth century Franz Grillparzer (1791–1872) was acclaimed by Byron (whom Grillparzer in his turn much admired), albeit with jocular reservations about the difficulties of his name.¹ That was in the

1 Secondary literature on Grillparzer is extensive. Two major biographies in German are those by Raoul Auernheimer, *Franz Grillparzer. Der Dichter Österreichs* (Vienna: Ullstein, 1948) and Josef Nadler, *Franz Grillparzer* (Vienna: Bergland, 1952). There are three excellent general introductions to his work in English by Douglas Yates, *Franz Grillparzer* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1946); by W. E. Yates, *Grillparzer* (Cambridge: CUP, 1972); and by Bruce Thompson, *Franz Grillparzer* (Boston: Twayne, 1982). See also Gustav Pollak, *Franz Grillparzer and the Austrian Drama* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1907), pp. 253–75; G. A. Wells, *The Plays of Grillparzer* (London: Pergamon, 1969); Ian F. Roe, *Franz Grillparzer. A Century of Criticism* (Columbia, SC: Camden House, 1995); and Armin Gebhardt, *Franz Grillparzer und sein dramatisches*

context of another of his classical dramas, *Sappho*, performed in 1818 and published the following year, and Byron was dead before the appearance of *Des Meeres und der Liebe Wellen*,² even though the first mention in Grillparzer's writing of his working on the theme goes back to 1820. The five-act tragedy in blank verse was completed between 1828 and 1829, first performed at the Burgtheater in Vienna on April 5, 1831 (without great success after the third act, as Grillparzer noted), and published in 1840.³ When the very thorough edition

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- Werk* (Marburg: Tectum, 2002), pp. 55–66. There is a bibliographical guide by Joachim Müller, *Franz Grillparzer* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1963, 2. ed. 1966), and see Annalisa Viviani, *Grillparzer-Kommentar I. Zu den Dichtungen* (Munich: Winckler, 1972), pp. 74–80. Grillparzer was interested in Spanish literature. Whether he knew Alxinger's *Musaio*s is unclear but likely. On his admiration for Byron (and Shakespeare), see Nadler, *Grillparzer*, esp. pp. 234–6.
- 2 The text is in section 1, volume 4 of the standard edition of Grillparzer, *Sämtliche Werke: Historisch-kritische Gesamtausgabe*, ed. August Sauer and Reinhold Backmann (Vienna and Leipzig: Gerlach und Wiedling/ Schroll, 1909–48 (and see 1, vol. 19). There are numerous individual editions, including several for English-speaking students, going back to that by Martin Schütze (New York: Holt, 1912). Others are by Kind in 1916, with an important introduction; by Douglas Yates (Oxford: Blackwell, 1950); by Roy C. Cowen (Waltham, Massachusetts: Blaisdell, 1969); and by Mark Ward (Driffield: Hutton, 1981). All have useful introductions and copious notes, although some of these — that Aphrodite Urania was not actually worshipped at Sestos, or that the plant broom does not cling to walls — might distract rather than explain. Most editions adopt the text printed in the *Gesamtausgabe*, which has 2120 blank verse lines, rather than the later revision by Backmann which turned 1451 and 1452 into a single line, leaving 2019. The 2120-line text is used here, and translations are again mine, though the work was translated by Elizabeth Dowden as *Hero and Leander* in Dublin in the nineteenth century (see John Hennig in *Modern Language Review* 52, 1957, 576f); by Henry H(armon) Stevens, *Hero and Leander* (Yarmouth Port, MA: Register Press, 1938), with a new version by his sometime collaborator Arthur Burkhard, also as *Hero and Leander* (Yarmouth Port, MA: Register Press, 1962); and by Samuel Solomon, *Franz Grillparzer, Plays on Classic Themes* (New York: Random House, 1969), pp. 421–554 as *The Waves of Sea and Love*. All imitate the metre. Solomon includes a line (1707) not in the standard edition to give 2121 in total: see his note, p. 529. That line *is* present in the edition by John Kind, because the standard edition had not yet reached this play when his text was published. Kind's text also has 2120 lines, but there are other textual differences, and he used an earlier (Berlin) collected edition and also the 1840 printed version. On the genesis of the work, see the volume *Franz Grillparzer in the series Dichter über ihre Dichtungen*, ed. Karl Pörnbacher (Munich: Hiemeran, 1970), pp. 185–203. See also Arthur Burkhard, *Franz Grillparzer in England and America* (Vienna: Bergland, 1961).
 - 3 Amongst the many secondary studies see the brief introduction in English by E. Papst, *Grillparzer: Des Meeres und der Liebe Wellen* (London: Arnold, 1967), and with it the review by Bruce Thompson in *German Life and Letters* NS 22 (1969), 197–9, on the difficult but central concept of *Sammlung* ('wholeness', 'transcendental composure'), set in the play against the uncontrolled nature of love. To list just a few works over a long period, see Francis Wolf-Cirian, *Grillparzers Frauengestalten* (Stuttgart and Berlin: Cotta, 1908), pp. 175–200; Frederick E. Coenen, *Franz Grillparzer's Portraiture of Men* (Chapel Hill, NC: UNCP, 1951), pp. 49–55; Herbert Seidler, "Zur Sprachkunst in Grillparzers Hero-Tragödie", *Festschrift für*

of Grillparzer's German text was prepared in 1916 for American students by John L. Kind, who taught at the University of Wisconsin, it was prefaced by a poem on Grillparzer's play, much as some earlier versions were accompanied by laudatory lyrics. This piece, a double sonnet by the poet and translator (and Kind's colleague) William Ellery Leonard (1876–1944), is worth consideration for its attitude to the story and its reception.⁴ It is an "old Greek romance/ Of maid and tow'r and lover drowned by night" retold by "A Teuton singer" — the description is possibly unfortunate — who is "wise in circumstance,/ Wise in the mind of man, and wise in light ..." The perennial appeal of the ever-young story is stressed, but the second sonnet is about Grillparzer's use of it:

Urania lost with Hero. And the Night,
The gulf between man's hopes and man, the Sea —
Estrangling and irrevocable Might —
Leander could not master it — can we?

The final part of the poem refers to Grillparzer's most original element, the high priest, who sacrifices everything (perhaps even Grillparzer's first Viennese audience) to his own reading of the minds of the gods. Leonard's summary couplet is more general:

Thus to old Hellespont we come — but bring
New times, new tears, new poet's questioning.

Grillparzer was conscious of the unusual name of his play, which led to parodies and has caused some translators to revert to a simple "Hero and Leander". Although in his diaries and notes he tends to refer simply to the play of Hero

Moritz Enzinger, ed. Herbert Seidler (Innsbruck: Wagner, 1953), pp. 167–84; Dorothy Lasher-Schlitt, "Grillparzers Hero und Leander, eine psychologische Untersuchung", *Jahrbuch der Grillparzer-Gesellschaft* 111/3 (1960), 106–114; Gert Kleinschmidt, *Illusion und Untergang. Die Liebe im Drama Grillparzers* (Lahr: Schauenburg, 1967), although with less on our play than might be expected; Mark Ward, *Grillparzer: Des Meeres und der Liebe Wellen* (Glasgow: University, 2007); Nicole Streitter-Kastberger, "Nach Frauenglut mißt Männerliebe nicht.' Geschlechtsdifferenzen in Grillparzers antiken Dramen", in: Bernhard Fetz, Michael Hansel and Hannes Schweiger, edd., *Franz Grillparzer: ein Klassiker für die Gegenwart* (Vienna: Szolnay, 2016), pp. 42–61. Jellinek, *Sage*, ends his survey with Grillparzer, pp. 67–78.

4 Kind, *Des Meeres*, p. cxxxv. The poem has the title "On Grillparzer's *Des Meeres und der Liebe Wellen*". Leonard began his own career with a work on Byron. Kind's edition, in the Oxford German Series by American Scholars, has full notes (though no complete vocabulary), and a lengthy appendix by C. M. Purin of questions, summaries and themes for discussion: literary text-editions have changed, but also dwindled over the years.

and Leander, he wrote in 1853 that: “Der etwas prätios klingende Titel ... sollte im voraus auf die romantische oder vielmehr menschlich allgemeine Behandlung der antiken Fabel hindeuten” (the slightly precious-sounding title ... was intended to give a preliminary indication of the romantic, or rather, general-human treatment of the classical story). That title, while not signalling the known narrative, is both powerful and memorable, equating the force of the sea with that of passion. The waves of the sea and of love both prove fatal. Grillparzer stressed that his interest had been in the main figure, and Hero is very much at the centre. He also noted that the fourth act could indeed appear a little tedious, but that this was intended to indicate the slow passing of time. At the first performance the final two acts were badly received, and Grillparzer noted that it was not until a particularly talented actress took on the central role that the work was accepted in Austria.⁵

What interested Grillparzer was character and motivation, and accordingly there is a focus upon the psychology of Hero and upon the conflict within her between love and the duty and inner balance required of her as a priestess, a role to which she is consecrated on the very day she encounters Leander. It is a play about a woman who is very young, who accepts for questionable reasons a role and duty for which she does not really have a vocation, and who discovers her mistake just too late and with tragic consequences. Grillparzer's principal addition is the figure of the high priest, the *Oberpriester*, who is also Hero's paternal uncle, who sees himself as the agent of the (now questionable) gods. In literary terms he is descended from the *falsche Nonne*, the wicked nun, who extinguishes the light in the *Königskinder* ballads. Further, Ovid's sleepy nurse is replaced as Hero's companion by the lively temple-maiden Ianthe ('flower' 'violet'), to whom Hero is initially hostile, but to whom she later becomes significantly close.⁶ The cast is augmented by the addition of a companion to Leander, Naukleros ('ship-owner, traveller'); by Hero's parents (Leander's are already dead); and by temple guards, *Tempelhüter*, one of whom has an important role. Fishermen, servants and onlookers at the festival have

5 Pörnbacher, *Grillparzer*, p. 202. For his diary comments on the first performance, see p. 197. The actress mentioned was Marie Bayer-Bürck, and he added that it had thus far not been performed in Germany since there were no performers there with equivalent skills. All this underlines that this is very much a dramatic production. See also on its production history O. Paul Straubinger, “Des Meeres und der Liebe Wellen im Urteil der Zeit”, *Vorträge: Grillparzer-Forum Forchtenstein* (1968), 12–23. There is interesting material on Julie Gley in the role of Hero, p. 15.

6 The name is incidentally that of a sea-nymph, and is the name used by Byron in his dedication to the first two cantos of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* in 1812, which may be where Grillparzer found it.

non-speaking roles. That there are several connexions with Büssel's *Hero und Leandros* has been noted, and Grillparzer clearly knew the familiar classical texts, of course, as well as Schiller. There are explicit nods to the *Königskinder*-ballads and to Shakespeare. As a passing anecdote on the vagaries of literary research, it was once considered, based on a handwritten note, that Grillparzer had been influenced here by *A Yorkshire Tragedy*, a work of 1605 that is unconnected and obscure: but a capital S in untidy German *Schreibschrift* of the period looks like a Y, and the word concerned was 'Shakespeare', referring to the altogether less unlikely *Romeo and Juliet*.⁷

Grillparzer's decision to focus less upon action than upon the psychology of Hero (and to an extent of Leander) is understandable, and the tragic outcome is foreshadowed and underlined symbolically throughout, both in the language and in actual incidents. Grillparzer was also aware that both Hero and Leander are very young, and he brings out Hero's (and to an extent Leander's) immaturity, lack of experience, and occasionally downright childishness, but especially her innocence. This is extremely hard to portray on stage, given the need to find a performer mature enough in acting terms to take on the role.⁸

The play opens on the morning when Hero is to take her irrevocable vows as priestess of Aphrodite Urania, the chaste goddess, whose nature is explained in the text. Making Hero a priestess at all, as in Musaios, was an important step in the development of the narrative; but when she is simply a priestess of Aphrodite this permits Leander to argue that the goddess of love must surely encourage love. A division between Aphrodite and her more capricious son, Eros, is sometimes made, but Grillparzer makes a different distinction. He has Hero devote herself specifically to the goddess of intellectual, chaste, heavenly love, as described by Pausanias in Plato's *Symposium*, dividing Aphrodite Urania from the common Aphrodite, Aphrodite Pandemos. Hero's dedication does not permit transgression. Since the distinction was made already by

7 See Douglas Yates, *Grillparzer*, pp. 164–70 (the entry seems to say *die Tragödie von Yorkschire*). It is amusing actually to glance at the text of *A Yorkshire Tragedy* (which has been ascribed to Shakespeare), since it is in fact about murders: *The Shakespeare Apocrypha*, ed. C. F. Tucker Brooke (Oxford: Clarendon, 1908), pp. 249–61. See also Douglas Yates, "Grillparzer's Hero and Shakespeare's Juliet", *Modern Language Review* 21 (1926), 419–25.

8 Pictures of early performances or photographs of more recent ones (there are some in Roy C. Cowen's edition) illustrate graphically the problem of casting Hero. Gunter Schäble, *Grillparzer* (Velber: Friedrich, 1967) has a photograph of the Austrian Paula Wessely (1907–2000) in the role in 1948, however, which does look convincing; she was known as a highly skilled performer.

Büssel, his play may well have provided the idea, though Grillparzer developed it more fully and clearly.⁹

We are not simply at an annual festival at Sestos, then, but one where Hero is to take her final vows, and Grillparzer explores Hero's emotional state as she embraces the chaste priesthood, which will be the reason behind the prohibition against the love, through her dialogue with the high priest and her parents. This exposes the psychological basis for her decision. As in other versions, there is a family right to supply the celebrants of the temple, and this is something upon which Hero has herself seized. Her father's brother is the high priest, and his sense of calling, duty and attitude is set against hers throughout, although his motivation can be ambiguous. The setting for the first act is the temple, with votive statues of Amor and of Hymenaeus (Hymen), love and married love, in the foreground. Hero is adorning the temple with myrtle and roses, flowers associated with marriage (Aidusa brings these from Hero to Leander in Büssel's play), and parallels between her decision to take up the priesthood and that of a nun about to become the bride of Christ are unmistakable, especially in a play written in nineteenth-century Austria (with the added irony that it is the high priest who matches the *false* nun of the ballads). Hero tells us that she is the centre of the coming feast, adding that since she has taken up her ancestral rights, she has been permitted to spend her life in quiet service. She dwells rather too long on her own central importance, but stops herself, and instead decorates the statue of Hymenaeus, the god who binds people together, and from whom she is herself *gern frei*, happy to be free (34). When she comes to adorn the statue of Amor, whom she addresses as her brother, and someone who should not therefore hurt her, she comments ironically that she will honour him "Wie man verehrt, was man auch nicht erkennt" (43, as one honours something one does not know). We shall hear more about her actual brother later, which increases the irony of her statement.

Ianthe, the temple maiden and later Hero's confidante, demonstrates conflict, rather than friendship at this stage, as she mocks Hero gently for being so distant. She also mentions with enthusiasm two young men, strangers, at

9 See Plato, *The Symposium*, trans. W. Hamilton (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1951), p. 45f. (the speech of Pausanias on the two Aphrodites). See also p. 118, n. 12. Herodotos mentions (*Histories*, I, 105) several ancient temples to Aphrodite Urania, de Selincourt, p. 56f. The passage of the *Symposium* is discussed in detail by Charles Seltman, *The Twelve Olympians* (London: Pan, 1952), pp. 78–91, esp. p. 84f. Seltman refers to the custom of binding girls to the temple and cites a Pindaric ode on this topic. In Jelinek, *Sage*, the distinction between the two Aphrodites is also discussed, p. 66 and p. 69 with reference to Büssel and Grillparzer respectively, though without linking them; he calls the earthly Aphrodite *Venus Vulgivaga*. See Kind's edition, p. cxxii, who does link the two dramatists.

the gates, and comments, to Hero's irritation, that she too might have enjoyed a glimpse of them. Hero's petulant response is that of the school playground, threatening to tell her uncle, although she tries to overcome her anger, and when the high priest appears she confesses that she was about to become angry, an excessive emotion that she knows she must keep under control. While we can see that she has some self-awareness, we may wonder already about just how secure her inner composure really is. She does not, in fact, tell on Ianthe, but does ask for a temple guard to check the gates.

Hero's psychology is explored further in extended dialogue with her uncle, in which he expresses regret that she does not have a confidante. She explains that there is so much to do in the temple — citing innumerable small and in fact trivial tasks — that she would have no time to chat. Her uncle points out that she has not understood him, but she asks to be left as she is, replying, with considerable dramatic irony, "Was man nicht faßt, erregt auch kein Verlangen" (137, what one does not understand arouses no desire). The priest is at this point still wary; he wishes her to become the priestess but knows that the decision must be the right one, and his fears, at least, are honest. Hero, however, claims that she has only really found self-awareness in the temple, and takes comfort in it. Why, she says, would a swimmer who has reached land want to venture back into the sea? The irony of this image will of course have resonated with the audience, aware that this is a play about Hero and Leander.¹⁰

The priest warns her of the limitations in this state of mind, which might, he says, be called selfish. He has wanted her to feel a direct and transcendental link with the divine — to have, in effect, a vocation — but she makes the literal response that "keine Stimme kam von oben" (191, no voice came from above). Still concerned that her reasons are not strong enough, her uncle mentions Hero's parents, and we learn that she is escaping from her childhood, from a bullying and ever-angry father (anger is a recurrent theme) whom her mother suffered in silence, and from an older brother who was always picking on her because she was a girl, singling her out *zum Spielwerk seiner Launen*, as the plaything of his moods (208). All this cannot but arouse the suspicion that Hero is an immature teenager fleeing from an overly masculine household. In Büssel Hero is dedicated to the temple because of her brother, but there she herself had no choice. Hero's unhappiness here is understandable, but her response, to devote herself for life to the goddess because of this, rather than because of a genuine calling, is extreme.

10 W. E. Yates, *Grillparzer*, p. 167 discusses the passage, pointing to the way in which it underlines Hero's irresponsible, uncomprehending escapism (his words). Yates also comments, p. 174, on the relationship between the nun of the ballads and the priest.

At this point Grillparzer brings her parents onto the stage, which fills in the picture considerably. Hero runs to her mother while the father makes a pompous, out-of-breath, and clearly prepared speech which he forgets, picking things up only to say how pleased he is that they can observe the ceremony. Interestingly, even he adds a tiny note of doubt, but then criticises the thus far silent mother, who has plainly also had doubts, until Hero begs her uncle to tell her father to be quiet. Her mother greets her hesitantly, and the father and uncle are distracted in a small symbolic scene in which a ring-dove, a symbol of Aphrodite Pandemos, is found nesting in the temple grounds and must be removed, a point which is elaborated upon later and explained superficially, although it is clear enough as an image.

Hero protests to her mother that she is no longer *jenes wildes Mädchen* (274), that rebellious girl that she had been at home and is now calm — but the mother interrupts her with a simple: *Kind*, child. Hero reiterates that the temple has become her refuge from the storms of life, and her phrasing is significant:

Im Tempel hier hat auch die Frau ein Recht,
Und die Gekränkten haben freie Sprache (279f.)

(Here in the temple women also have rights, and the oppressed can speak freely).

We learn from the mother that Hero's brother has left, and Hero comments that this might have tempted her to come home, "Doch ist nicht er, sind da noch Hundert andre" (307, but even if he is not there, there are a hundred like him). The mother counters that a woman is only happy with a husband: "Das Weib ist glücklich nur an Gattenhand" (320), and is scolded for this by Hero, who sees her parents' relationship from one side only and has judged the idea of marriage negatively. The mother protests that the selfish teachings of the temple have stolen her child, but Hero is adamant that no-one will take her proposed life away from her.

The incident with the dove is now developed. Nothing that mates can stay in the temple precincts, we are told, and the broody dove is removed. The mother compares the removal of the dove from its nest with the removal of Hero from her home, and Hero herself, to the annoyance of the high priest, strokes and calms the dove. We shall hear in the next two acts Hero singing a song of Leda stroking the down of Zeus in his disguise as a swan. The high priest addresses Hero's mother as *schwachmütig Weib*, weak-minded woman, but his comments are aimed also at Hero as he explains that neither fruitful vines nor breeding doves have any place: "All was sich paart bleibt ferne diesem Haus,/ Und Jene

dort fugt heut sich gleichem Los" (357f. Anything that mates has no place anywhere near this house, and she too submits today to that same law). Hero associates herself with the dove, however, commenting on how people are arguing about them. This gives occasion for the high priest to explain to the mother that the temple is to Aphrodite Urania, and that she could take her child and go, rather than allowing Hero, although of the inferior sex, "Ein Selbst zu sein, ein Wesen, eine Welt" (376, to be a self, a being, a world). But Hero releases the dove — giving it its freedom, a concept that will return in a very different context — and assures her mother that her decision is made, that she is strong. Besides, she adds, bringing down the level of discussion, her mother should just see the priestly finery she is going to wear.

The father is eager to move things along, but before the ceremony (and before the meeting of Hero and Leander) the high priest states his own creed, which is that of making a decision and keeping it. Choice is dangerous and wasteful:

Die freie Wahl ist schwacher Toren Spielzeug
 Der Tücht'ge sieht in jedem Soll ein Muß
 Und Zwang, als erste Pflicht, ist ihm die Wahrheit. (414–6)

(Free will is the plaything of weak fools. A capable man takes every 'ought' as a 'must' and for him truth is compulsion, as principal duty).

He had said that if he thought Hero weak in her resolve, he would dismiss her, but he does not do so. The act divides here, though it is nearly over, as Hero takes her vows in front not just of the high priest and her parents (who do not speak again), but now in front too of Naukleros and his friend Leander, of whom we have so far only heard as having been observed at the gate by the temple-girls.

Naukleros and Leander, strangers from Abydos, settle down to watch the ceremony, despite the temple guard. Only Naukleros speaks in this act, commenting on Leander's melancholy behaviour. The ceremony itself opens with a hymn to Aphrodite which sounds rather like a Marian prayer, underlining the convent parallels again. Hero pours incense onto the flames at the altars of Aphrodite and Amor, while Leander kneels by the statue of Hymenaeus. Prompted by Naukleros to look up at the beautiful priestess, Leander does so as Hero reaches the altar of Hymenaeus, and the pair see each other for the first time. Hero becomes literally confused and the dramatization is striking; first she claims that she has forgotten the tongs to spread the incense, and the high priest points out that she is holding them; then she sprinkles too much

incense, and we recall that this is to Hymenaeus. More significantly, she had already pronounced to Amor the invocation “Der du die Liebe gibst, nimm all die meine” (495, you who give love, take all of mine), and now she begins to say this again, but to Hymenaeus (or to Leander?). The high priest stops her and rushes her on to complete the ceremony. As she leaves, she stops as if to adjust her shoe and looks back towards the two young men. Her parents approach her, and the curtain falls on a striking visual climax.

The slightly shorter second act opens with a certain amount of exposition as Naukleros lectures and advises his friend.¹¹ We hear that Leander lives alone on the seashore, that he is skilled as an oarsman and as a swimmer (*der Fische Neid*, 541, ‘the envy of the fish’), and that the recent death of his mother has freed him (548 *frei gemacht* — the recurrent motif). We learn too that the end of the festival at noon means the end of their *Freiheit* (573), their freedom to stay within the temple precincts. While Naukleros has a great deal to say, it is noticeable that Leander says practically nothing, claiming only that he is ill. Naukleros then embarks upon an extended speech — eighty-odd lines — which is again partly expository, partly indicative of what will happen, and only at the end does he suddenly realise what is wrong with Leander. First he tells us somewhat crossly how much the young women prefer Leander to him,¹² even though his darker friend is “Kein Amor mehr, doch Hymens treues Bild” (586 no longer a cupid, but a veritable image of Hymenaeus), then adds that Leander took no notice of all the girls at the festival (it is again a classical motif that the young men come to look for them there). Leander, he says, does not even know “Obs Mädchen waren oder wilde Schwäne” (618, whether they were girls or wild swans; this links with the recurrent Leda-motif). But they all looked at Leander, even *Die Priestrin selbst* (621, the priestess herself). His judgement of Hero is blunt, and full of dramatic irony. She is

Ein herrlich prangend Weib!
Die besser tat, am heut’gen frohen Tag
Der Liebe Treu zu schwören ewiglich,
Als ihr sich zu entziehn ... (621–4)

11 The role of Naukleros as a kind of guardian to the melancholy Leander may be related to that of Mercutio and Benvolio to Romeo in Shakespeare’s play: see Douglas Yates, *Grillparzer*, p. 165.

12 This motif demonstrates the possibility of independent emergence of individual motifs in different versions; it is extremely unlikely that Grillparzer had ever encountered the play by de la Selve, where the same idea is used.

(A really magnificent female! She'd have done better to swear eternal loyalty to love on this fine day that to withdraw from it ...)

which leads him into a detailed and enthusiastic description of her beauty. Hero's beauty is conventionally and objectively lauded in many versions, but this, in the mouth of Naukleros, is a slightly coarse, or at least not entirely tasteful purely visual appraisal on the part of a young man, set up to contrast with Leander's emotional response which follows. Within Naukleros's remarks, however, are references to the banished dove, and Hero is described as a *Königskind*. Convinced that Leander had not even noticed her, Naukleros points out that she had certainly seen him (*Doch sie sah dich*, 638) as he knelt by the statue of Hymenaeus. He had also noticed her hesitation before she completed her office, and that her glance was in stark contrast to the chilly day on which she has renounced love for ever. Naukleros interprets that glance as "Es ist doch Schad' und: 'Den da möcht' ich wohl'" (649, 'it's a pity' and 'I could fancy him').

Naukleros's seemingly interminable speech about Hero and the situation is brought to a sudden halt. At first he thinks that Leander is laughing with this young man's banter, but sees that Leander is in tears when he tells Naukleros to be more respectful in speaking of Hero. Leander insists that he is wretched, sick, dying, but Naukleros is delighted that Leander has at last fallen in love. Still not grasping the depths of Leander's feelings, he urges him to come with him to the town to find the girls they saw at the festival, reminding him (and the audience) that Hero herself has this very day (*an diesem Tag*, 673) forsworn love, and that severe penalties would follow if she were to break those vows. There are regular reminders of the last-minute aspects of the situation. Leander refuses, and in response to his despair Naukleros offers a slim hope. Is her vow really so strong? Leander should at least test things by speaking to her. The pragmatic Naukleros points out that as strangers in Sestos they can claim ignorance if they are caught in the temple, and they see Hero coming to fetch water and singing the song about Leda seduced by Zeus in the likeness of a swan. We hear only a few lines, including the patently sexual "Sie aber streichelt/ Den weichen Flaum" (726, But she strokes the soft down ...), but she breaks off, saying that her uncle does not like her singing that song, although she cannot see what harm it can do.

Leander bursts forward and throws himself at her feet. Still he says almost nothing, and Naukleros explains that he has a particular sickness that she, rather than the priests of Apollo, can cure. Hero explains that she is under a vow to remain chaste and that he could be under threat of death and urges him to leave because (significantly) she would be sad if he were harmed. Leander,

still saying little apart from urging her to stay, declares with an obvious dramatic irony that if he is to be banished, “so senkt in Meersgrund mich hinab!” (773, then let me be sent to the very depths of the sea). When Naukleros pleads for Hero at least to speak to Leander, her reiteration of the dangers of death (also prophetic, of course) includes the telling comment: “Noch gestern, wenn ihr kamt, da war ich frei,/ Doch heut versprach ichs, und ich halt’ es auch” (788f. Had you [two] come even yesterday, then I was still free. But today I made a promise and I shall keep it).

In spite of the assertion that she will be true to her promise, the use of the word *frei* will be reiterated in the next act. She urges Leander to find someone else, a nice reversal of her fears in Ovid that he has actually done so. Throwing himself again at her feet, Leander exclaims *O himmlisch Weib!* (813, o divine woman), echoing the *ipsa dea est* motif. In this scene Naukleros speaks for Leander most of the time (although he is pushed aside when Hero offers a drink from her water-jug), and Leander is passive. The next two acts demonstrate a radical change in the melancholy youth, lonely and depressed after the death of his mother, just as Hero, supposedly escaping from a home dominated by bullying and dominant males into the safety of the temple, will change just as radically. The act ends with the arrival of the high priest, who establishes that the two young men are from Abydos — with whom the people of Sestos have issues, we are told — and orders them out. When Naukleros refers to Leander as unhappy, however, the latter claims that he is not, now that he has some hope, so that Naukleros has to change tack and warn him. But Leander now acts with a new resolve, striding off while Naukleros follows, trying to restrain him.

The central act moves to Hero's tower, with the high priest conducting her into *der Priestrin stille Wohnung* (893), the quiet dwelling of the priestess, between the sea and the skies. As he points out all the accoutrements in this place where she can serve the gods, she merely repeats *Hier also, hier*, here then, here. To his surprise that she is not more delighted, she counters (with dramatic irony) that she simply needs a night's rest to come to terms with everything. Her comments to her uncle are revealing for what she says and for the sea-imagery in her choice of words:

Hier ebb'n leichter der Gedanken Wogen,
Der Störung Kreise fliehn dem Ufer zu,
Und Sammlung wird mir werden, glaube mir. (942–4)

(The waves of thought ebb more easily here, the circles of disturbance push towards the shore, and I shall achieve inner composure, believe me).

That she is *not* composed is clear. The key idea of *Sammlung*, however, is picked up by the high priest and described as the greatest good, an inner state of mind in which individuality dissolves and lets the being become one with the divine.¹³ *Ipsa dea est?* But Hero interrupts to say that her spirit will not fly so high. Her aims, in fact, are very limited, and the way she expresses them, while intended to reassure him, are clearly directed at herself: “Allein was not, und was mir auferlegt,/ Gedenk’ ich wohl zu tun. Des sei gewiß. (971f. But what is needed and what is required of me, *that* I certainly intend to do. Be assured of that). “Gedenk’ ich wohl zu tun” is highly conditional, but the high priest accepts it, even though he comments that these aims are not very far-reaching and warns her to avoid anything that might lead to inner disturbance. His last comments, however, are more ominous: after urging her to treat him as a second father (we recall her attitude to her actual father), he warns her that he is a man who

Das eigne Blut aus diesen Adern gösse,
Wüßt’ er nun einen Tropfen in der Mischung
Der Unrecht birgt und Unerlaubtes hegt. (1000–1002)

(would spill his own blood out of these veins [he holds out his arm] if he knew there was a single drop there that was concealing any wrongdoing or forbidden deeds).

Hero is left alone, aware that the incident with the young men has had an effect on her. She tries to reassure herself that she has found out what attraction (*Neigung*) is, and that she will now avoid it. Unconsciously she takes her lamp and places it by the window, hoping that it may be a star for any late wanderer, visible as far away as the distant shore, which we know, of course, to be Abydos. She then takes the lamp away, talking to herself, and saying that if she extinguishes the lamp, these new feelings in her may be extinguished as well. But she does not extinguish it, and instead the song of Leda stroking the swansdown comes back into her head, causing her to comment: “Nicht Götter steigen mehr zu wüsten Türmen,/ Kein Schwan, kein Adler bringt Verlaßnen Trost” (1046f., Gods do not come to deserted towers any more, no swan, no eagle brings comfort to the forsaken). As most commentators point out, Zeus in his various disguises — a shower of gold to Danaë in her tower

13 Grillparzer’s poem ‘An die Sammlung’ (To Composure) appeared in 1833. It is included in Mark Ward’s edition of the play, and discussed in Paul K. Whitaker, “The Concept of ‘Sammlung’ in Grillparzer’s Works”, *Monatshefte* 41 (1949), 93–103.

(like Hero's), a swan to Leda or an eagle to Aegina — was offering rather more than just comfort to the forsaken, and all three sexual encounters fit well with her own situation. And then she gives way, and allows herself to think of the *schöner Jüngling*, the handsome young man, and calls out to him a symbolic *Gute Nacht*, goodnight. The answering "goodnight" is not, however, an echo, as Leander now climbs into the room. Hero at once says that he will be doomed if she cries out, but of course, she does not. Leander has seen the light of the lamp — placed by accident, or at least with only subconscious intent, in this version — and has broken in on Hero's isolation. Love will find a way.¹⁴

The scene which follows mixes dramatic suspense with a careful representation of the youth and inexperience of the pair. Leander has swum the Hellespont, and Hero first tells him to wait a little and rest. If the lamp led him, then she will in future have to put it out, but Leander, now suddenly eloquent, talks of how the lamplight spread out like a net (which will also be a recurrent, but ambivalent and ultimately threatening image¹⁵), lighting a miserable world, and he urges her in future not to conceal the lamp. She still insists on her vow, however, to remain *liebesleer*, devoid of love, and adapts the comment made in the preceding act, addressing it now only to Leander:

Ehgestern, wenn du kamst, war ich noch frei,
Nun ist zu spät. Drum geh und kehr nicht wieder! (1129f.)

(If you [singular] had come the day before yesterday, then I was still free.
Now it is too late. Go and do not return).

While urging him to go, she hears noises, and he is pushed into her room, with the lamp, as Hero invokes the gods for help.

The noises came from a temple guard and the girl Ianthe, but these two leave again despite the suspicions of the former. Leander returns, first in the dark and touches Hero's shoulder, and is sent back for the lamp. When he thanks her for saving him, her reply, at virtually the centre of the play, is a turning point in Hero's psychological development:

14 The obvious links with the balcony scene in *Romeo and Juliet* are noted regularly. There may be another quite involuntary parallel at 1177 when Hero uses Leander's name, even though she has not been told it. This recalls the old conundrum about why Juliet is concerned about Romeo, his forename, rather than Montague. Here, the usual (plausible) answer is that Hero must have heard Naukleros use the name, although she does not use it to herself in the scene before he enters. This may also be a deliberate avoidance.

15 I have discussed the image in: "Das tragische Netz in Grillparzers *Des Meeres und der Liebe Wellen*", *Etudes Germaniques* 27 (1972), 232–42. I was unaware of its use by Büssel.

Dank, sagst du? Dank? Wofür? Daß du noch lebst?
 Das all dein Glück? Entsetzlicher! Verrucher!
 Was kamst du her? nichts denkend als dich selbst,
 Und störst den Frieden meiner stillen Tage,
 Vergiftest mir den Einklang dieser Brust?
 O hätte doch verschlungen dich das Meer
 Als du den Leib in seine Wogen senkstest!
 Wär', abgelöst, entglitten dir den Stein,
 An dem du dich, den Turm erklimmend, hieltst,
 Und du — Entsetzlich Bild! — Leander, o — (1168–77)

(Thanks, you say? Thanks? What for? That you are still alive? That's all you are grateful for? Terrible man! Wicked man! Why did you come — thinking only of yourself and disturbing the peace of my quiet days, and poisoning the harmony in my breast? Oh, if only the sea had swallowed you up when you plunged into the waves! Or if the stone had loosened and slipped when you held on to climb my tower, and then you — terrible image! — Leander, oh —)

The final destruction of her inner harmony and the accusations of selfishness collapse suddenly in the face of the idea that he might really have been killed. She now urges him to go back a different way, and realises that although she is trembling with fear, the fear is not for herself, but for him.

Leander declares his love, and Hero picks up the word *Liebe* just as the priest had done with the word *Sammlung* in the first half of the act. She remains nervous, jumping at every noise, but Leander is emboldened, and asks if he may come again, playing (again childishly) on Hero's feelings by stressing that he will have to swim through the *brausend wilde[s] Meer* (1208), the wild and raging sea, in which he might sink and die. She agrees that he may come again, and he asks for the lamp to be set as a signal, then demands to know when he should come. Hero first suggests the next festival, then the next month, and as he argues it down to the next week she exclaims: *Komm morgen denn!* (1229, so come tomorrow). The naivety (genuine or possibly strategic) of Leander is further underlined in his demand for a farewell kiss, an action he says that he has seen but presumably not experienced: "Sie legen Lipp und Lippe/ Ich sah es wohl" (1241f. people put their lips together, I've seen it). He goes on to claim again, *kindisch trotzend*, like a petulant child, that he will sink in the waves if he is refused. The scene is done lightly — he must put his hands behind his back like her prisoner and "Die Lampe solls nicht sehen" (1255, the lamp mustn't

see).¹⁶ She kisses him and rushes from the room. Leander hears footsteps. But they are Hero's, and she returns as the curtain falls.

The fourth act was condemned as overly long at the first performance, but it shows the radical changes in both protagonists, has tension, and at its climax points directly to the catastrophe. There are two scene changes, the act opening in front of Hero's tower, shifting to Leander's home in Abydos, and then returning to Sestos. The couple do not appear together in this act (nor will do so again alive), but are presented in their unhappy separation to the audience. Hero, who in the first act was (in spite of the high priest's wish that she should have a female confidante) irritated with Ianthe, is now very close to her; Leander, who was melancholy and subordinated to the more vigorous Naukleros, now takes the lead with equal forcefulness.

The act opens ominously, with the voice of a temple guard calling for assistance. We are then shown Hero, who expresses relief that Leander has escaped. It is late in the morning and the guard come to her and asks whether she has seen the man who just sprang into the sea. Hero dissembles, and when the high priest arrives, she accuses the guard of foolishness, then leaves, saying that she is going to sleep. The guard now reveals to the high priest that there was a light burning in Hero's tower all night, and the priest points out that she knows that lights might attract enemies. The guard reports, too, that there was much disturbance around the tower, as if there were a storm, although there was no wind or rain, and that when he investigated he found only Ianthe, who is known to be a troublemaker. The high priest demands to see her. The guard reiterates his story of the man jumping into the sea and of Hero's light, but the priest brushes this aside, still asking for Ianthe, until the guard mentions that the man swam towards Abydos, which strikes a chord. The high priest was about to give the guard a letter from Hero's parents to pass on to her but decides at that moment not to do so. The name Abydos has reminded him that the two young men came from there. He does not yet jump to the real conclusion, and Ianthe is a confusing factor; perhaps the young men were overbold, he thinks, and perhaps they were coming for Ianthe. He does not blame Hero — at least, not yet:

und Hero,
Unwissend trüge sie des Wissens Schuld,
Nebstdem, daß sie noch jung und neu im Leben,

16 In the opening lines of Musaios's poem the lamp is referred to as the witness (*epimartura*) of the secret love. Here is is precisely *not* allowed to be a witness.

Noch unbelehrt zu meiden die Gefahr,
 Ja zu erkennen sie. — Genug, genug!
 In meinem Innern reget sich ein Gott
 Und warnt mich, zu verhüten, ehs zu spät. (1360–6)

(and what if Hero unwittingly bore the guilt of knowing about it? Besides, she's still young and this life is new to her, and she hasn't yet been taught how to avoid danger, even to recognise it. Enough, enough! Within me a god moves, and warns me to take care, before it is too late).

When Hero's uncle quizzes Ianthe she denies knowledge of anything untoward. Hero defends her, and her attitude is completely changed, almost flippant, commenting that her uncle, familiar as he is with the gods, has told her that gods sometimes come to towers, to Danaë, or to Leda. When questioned directly, however, Hero ignores him, sitting and singing again the song of Leda, which has a reference in it to a *Königskind*. Hero defends Ianthe vigorously, arousing suspicion again in her uncle, who remembers that she had distanced herself from Ianthe earlier. The dialogue is striking: broken, disjointed, with Hero both defiant and abstracted, so full of her own feelings that the high priest talks past her. When he urges her to avoid any opportunity towards wrongdoing, she replies: "Wir meiden ihn, doch meidet er auch uns?" (1436, yes, we can avoid it, but does it avoid us?). To the priest's horrified "Sprachst aus Erfahrung du?" (1437, were you speaking from experience?), she changes the subject and asks the time, saying that she wishes to go to bed. It is of course, daytime, and the high priest now begins to realise more, imploring her: "Hero, Hero, Hero" (1442), just as Leander had done earlier. But he adds: "Hab Mitleid mit dir selbst!" (1443, have pity on yourself). Hero has changed radically and moved towards Ianthe as much as she has moved away from the high priest. Grillparzer himself noted that Hero remains completely unaware of the dangers of her new position, and that all indications of it come from others.¹⁷ Instead of giving her the letter he mentioned before, the high priest sends her on a wild-geese chase to look for the messenger who brought it, then gives her a range of other tasks that will keep her awake and fully occupied for the entire day.

The first part of the act ends with a soliloquy by the high priest which lays open his own inner conflict. He has tried not to believe the worst of Hero's actions, but now he is aware that there was a man in the temple grounds. He

17 Viviani, *Grillparzer-Kommentar*, p. 79. Leander is similarly oblivious: Schäble, *Grillparzer*, p. 78f.

does not know if it was Naukleros or Leander, but whichever it was, he is as good as dead; he curses him for having reached out a hand “Nach meinem Kind, nach meiner Götter Eigen” (1518, to my child, to what belongs to my gods). His utterly self-centred — “my gods” — motivation is complex: he wishes for family reasons to preserve Hero, and also to avoid any shame that could be brought upon the temple. He tries, therefore, to be as reasonable as he can, giving the temple guard orders to watch for the light, hoping that it has all been a mistake. But the doubt is there.

The next scene — the change of locality was indicated presumably with a backdrop — shows the radical change in Leander from melancholic youth in the shadow of Naukleros to a forceful and dominant, sword-wielding warrior, caught up in what Naukleros calls a madness (1661, “Er ist von Sinnen”, he is out of his mind). Aware that Leander is about to swim back to Sestos, Naukleros warns him that spies are on the lookout, and he would be a fool to rush *ins ausgespannte Netz* (1560, into the waiting net). The image of the net — a familiar one in tragedy, where the struggles of the protagonists tighten the net around themselves — has been positive before; now it is threatening, and when next encountered, a few lines later, it will be fatal. Naukleros tries to persuade Leander to stay away from the wild and stormy sea, not wishing to be the one

wenn du nun daliegst bleich und kalt,

...

Der treulos seine Freundespflicht versäumt,
Ihm selber wies die todgeschwellten Frücht,
Selbst wob das Netz, das klammernd ihn umfing. (1599–3)

(who, when you are lying there pale and cold ... failed faithlessly in his duty as a friend, the one who showed him the fruits ripe for death, who wove the net that held him tight).

Just as the priest struggled with Hero, Naukleros struggles with Leander, even trying and failing to bar him into his hut by force. Ironically, Leander calls on the gods to protect him, and at the last, throwing away the sword and shield he had picked up, entrusts himself to Amor and Hymenaeus, even if Death himself were to join them. Aware that a temple spy has been watching, Naukleros goes for help to restrain Leander; but he fails.

The final part of the act returns to Hero's tower. She has of course not found the messenger with the letter and asks Ianthe yet again whether it is evening

yet. Told by the temple guard that her uncle wants to see her, she sends him away, full of her new self-possession: “Ich denke künftig selbst mir zu gebieten” (1687, from now on I intend to be my own mistress). But she is tired, wondering if Leander will come, trying desperately to stay awake. When the high priest comes to find her, her first words as she awakes with a start are not directed at him: “Bist dus, mein Freund” (1705, is that you, my friend?). In an exchange where the speeches are again short, Hero continues to avoid answering the questions of the priest, although when he wants to dismiss Ianthe, she points out that she is *her* subordinate, not his, and that she knows her rights just as well as she knows — but she breaks off before she can say “duties”. The priest challenges her: what about the rights of the gods? “Die Götter sind zu hoch für unsre Rechte” (1737, the gods are too high for our rights), she replies, causing the priest to observe that she has matured. The final moments of the act are marked by what are effectively soliloquies by Hero and her uncle, who are now very far apart, with comments interpolated by the temple guard. The priest is still disturbed and wants to say “Blick auf! Das Unheil gähnt, ein Abgrund neben dir!” (1754, Open your eyes! disaster is yawning like an abyss in front of you), but she is now too self-assured to listen. He tries once more to persuade himself that she may just be an uncomprehending victim. But no: “Die Lampe strahlt. Unselig Mädchen! Sie leuchtet deiner Strafe, deiner Schuld” (1766f. The lamp is shining. Unhappy girl! It lights up your punishment, your guilt). The guard has seen it too, and the sea is running high in any case.

Hero herself addresses the lamp, determined to sit by it so that the wind does not extinguish it, fearful of falling asleep after having been kept on the move all day (she asks herself why). Yet she cannot prevent herself, and her broken speech indicates her drowsiness. She thinks that it might be better that he should not come but wants him to nevertheless. She will protect him, she says, but tiredness overcomes her and she falls asleep.

When the high priest and the guard see the light, the former declares “Der Götter Sturm verlösche deine Flamme” (1817, may the storm of the gods put out your flame), and enters the tower, leaving the guard outside, who sees some fishermen coming in from the storm, significantly carrying nets. They had been forbidden by the priest to go out in any case, thus covering another open question, of why Leander was not seen. The guard then sees the lamp move, and it goes out (this is made clear in a stage direction in the 1840 text) as darkness falls and Hero becomes ever more deeply asleep. The priest has been the instrument, the agent, and he declares that what will happen is now up to the unseen gods:

Nun, Himmlische, nun waltet eures Amts!
Die Schuldigen hält Meer und Schlaf gebunden,

Und so ist eures Priesters Werk vollbracht:
 Das Holz geschichtet und das Beil gezückt,
 Wend ich mich ab. Trefft Götter selbst das Opfer (1830–4)

(Now, divine ones, do your will. The guilty ones are bound by sea and sleep, and the work of your priest is done. The wood is cut, the axe drawn. I turn away. Let the gods themselves carry out the sacrifice).

The imagery of immolation echoes Abraham and Isaac more than Olympus.

The working out of the tragic development is the subject of the final act. The sea has calmed, and Ianthe tells Hero that there was no light in her room, causing Hero to reply in anguish simply “Kein Licht! Kein Licht!” (1842, No light! No light!), repeating it later. She tries to convince herself that the gods extinguished the lamp so that Leander would not swim, that the gods are good. She and Ianthe, however, soon find the body of Leander, hidden amongst bushes on the shore. Where in other versions Hero’s finding of the body and her suicide constitute the final scene, here the drama is extended with a confrontation between Hero and the high priest. When he enters, Hero orders Ianthe to conceal the body again and attempts to pretend that all is well. She cannot do so, and the priest sees the body, exclaiming “Gerechte Götter! / Ihr nahmt ihn an. Er fiel von eurer Hand!” (1905f. Just gods! You took him. He fell by your hand!). The gods may cause the death of Leander directly in earlier versions, but here the hypocrisy of the priest, whose own hand it was that put out the light, is striking. The gods as such play no direct part in the tragedy, and we have to ask how much the priest really feels the close relationship with the divine that he expected, but failed to find, in Hero. His private motivation, to keep shame from the temple and from his family, comes to the fore as he tries to control the situation for public consumption, as the guards and servants now arrive. This is a stranger thrown up on the shore, he says, and the priestess is distressed because a human being has died. Quickly he orders that the body be removed from Hero’s sight and delivered to Naukleros, who has come searching for him. The priest offers to ignore his presence in the temple grounds if he will remove the body.

Turning now to Hero, the high priest tells her that the gods have taken bloody revenge, but that now in humility they two (he says *uns*, we) must accept the punishment and ensure that no shame attaches to the sacred temple: “ew’ges Schweigen decke was geschehn” (1931, let eternal silence cover what has happened). Hero’s response is that she would rather cry out to the whole world what has happened to her and what she has lost and curse her uncle so that the winds carry her words to those very gods. Her apportioning of the blame picks up for the last time the recurrent image of the net:

Du warsts, du legtest tückisch ihm das Netz,
 Ich zog es zu, und da war er verloren. (1940f.)

(It was you, you spread out the net maliciously, I pulled it tight, and he was lost).

When Naukleros arrives, she repeats that she and her uncle have killed Leander, giving in a lengthy speech an imagined description of Leander's struggle against the storm which matches many of the epic or indeed lyric descriptions and includes Leander's imagined appeal to the gods. He will have raised his eyes to them, she surmises, but they either did not listen, or they were asleep — as of course she herself was. The gods are indifferent, if not yet non-existent. The tragedy is entirely human. Hero demands to go to her dead love, repeating that she killed him, echoing Ovid's Leander. The body is taken to the temple, something agreed to reluctantly by the priest because, as the guard now instructs *him* (a significant shift of power), it is the custom, and customs should be kept. He is still convinced that time will heal Hero's wounds, and that she will not transgress a second time.

Hero finds the body, and Ianthe asks that Hero be granted peace to say her farewell. Ianthe herself has learnt from the events and declares that she will never love: "Besitzen ist wohl schön, allein verlieren!" (2019, possessing may be beautiful, but losing!). The priest, still clinging to the idea that Hero will come to terms with Leander's death, addresses her: "Mein starkes, wackres Mädchen./ So wieder du mein Kind!" (2032f. my strong brave girl. You are my child again). But she no longer *is* his child, and when the body is removed, she makes to follow. Told that she must stay as priestess, she then demands that he be buried on their shore. This, too is forbidden, so she gives her girdle to go with Leander to his grave ("take the sign, since you had the reality," 2056). But she cannot let him go, and the play's climax is her final breakdown as she throws herself onto his body. Naukleros's despairing "Hab Mitleid, Herr!" to the high priest is countered with "Ich habe Mitleid, Deshalb errett' ich sie" (2069f. Have pity, sir! — I do have pity, and that is why I am saving her). Hero, however, asks Ianthe to take away the veil before her eyes. But she has no veil, and Ianthe makes clear that she is dying. The high priest demands that Leander's body be removed and hidden from Hero, but she calls out his name twice, and these are her last words in the play.

The high priest as self-appointed representative of the gods is Grillparzer's most interesting variation, and the final exchanges of the play are between him and Ianthe, between the master of the temple, the mediator of the gods and proponent of *Sammlung*, the complete composure that he himself does

not have, and the lowly temple serving-girl. Ianthe claims that Hero's heart is beating too fast, but the priest takes this as a sign of life. Through Ianthe we see Leander's body borne away, and at the phrase "Er kommt nicht wieder" (2099, he will not come back), Hero collapses and dies.

Clinging to delusion to the last, the priest thinks that the sea will soon divide those so wickedly joined. Ianthe responds that no sea is necessary: "der Tod hat gleiche Macht,/ Zu trennen, zu vereinen" (2104, death has the same power of dividing or uniting), because Hero is dead. Ianthe's anger against the priest spills over: "Vorsicht'ger Tor, sieh deiner Klugheit Werke!" (2107, you prudent fool, look at what your cleverness has done!). Declaring that he would himself die to prevent wrong, even if it were at the cost of her life, the priest still does not believe that Hero is dead and kneels by her. Ianthe meanwhile takes control and calls for those taking Leander's body away to return for Hero, so that both can be buried in one grave. Ianthe, the flighty girl of the first act, has learned the most, and acts now as a chorus. As the high priest descends the steps she commands — she does not ask — him to wait and demands her own freedom from the temple. The high priest says nothing, but the stage direction is significant: "Der Priester geht, sich verhüllend, ab", the priest leaves, covering his face. Ianthe calls after him: "Du gehst und schweigst? Sei Strafe dir dies Schweigen!" (2116, you go in silence? Let this silence be your punishment!). With that, she takes the wreath from the statue of Amor and throws it towards those who are dealing with Hero. More than a few studies of the play have themselves ended by citing Ianthe and the play's final line, which is indeed memorable: "Versprichst du viel, und hältst du also Wort?" (You promise a lot. But do you keep your word?).¹⁸ It is fitting that the whole should end on a general and open question. The ever-wider human implications of Ianthe's question — addressed to love? to life? to youth? — embrace the entire tradition of young lovers buffeted by the waves of love.

Grillparzer uses the question of vocation to set up a conflict between the uncontrollable nature of love and the inner composure that vocation implies, showing us that Hero has in fact no vocation, and is seeking not the closeness of the divine, but refuge from her home life and from an oppressive masculinity. As a priestess she can, she thinks, escape this, but the effects of love in the first instance (however much she might object to her mother's comment that

18 The 1938 translation by Stevens places this in the past tense, *promised*, so that it seems to summarise the events we have just watched. But it is *not* in the past tense and a general significance is implied. It has been noted that Büssel gives Ianthe's equivalent (and perhaps model) Aidusa, Hero's companion, the final line of his play, but it is not as telling.

a woman is happy only with a husband), and the dominance of her equally oppressive 'second father', the priest, have tragic consequences.

Grillparzer was not satisfied with the character of the priest, whose own apparent composure is suspect and who justifies his own actions with a claimed knowledge of the gods; but one wonders whether it is not Leander who is least convincing, perhaps most notably in the scene where he asserts himself (briefly) with sword-waving bravado against Naukleros's attempts to keep him in Abydos. Hero's shifting motivation throughout is far more carefully drawn. First, her deliberate retreat to the only possibility for self-assertion available to her as a member of the inferior sex (*des dürrftigen Geschlechts*, 375), and then in her development in sexual terms, which assumes a willing subordination to Leander (she trembles for him, not for herself) while rejecting the oppressive paternalism of the priest. Her breakdown and retreat into herself towards the end is well expressed. The irruption of the masculine into Hero's (false) serenity — the two young men at the gates, Leander in the precincts of the temple, then Leander climbing the tower — is underlined in a variety of ways.

Symbolic phrases and actions combine to build up effects, such as the shifting use of the image of the net, and the regular real or allegorical references to the dangers of the sea (at the last, 1970–3, a fatal sea of Hero's tears and blood). The dove and its removal, the excessive flame on the altar of Amor, and Hero's errors at the ceremony in the first act, plus the ongoing imagery of the lamp all make their contributions. Grillparzer reveals the state of mind of each character through different devices, from comments loaded with dramatic or tragic irony to inconsequential, halting or broken speech-patterns.¹⁹

The play works well as drama, despite that fourth act. Grillparzer's stagecraft in setting Hero between the priest and Ianthe, the arousal of tension underlined by the temple guard, and the ending of every act on a high point — these are all part of the well-constructed human drama. The gods may be invoked, but they are indeed too high for human rights and duties, and the underlying conflict is between the priest and Hero.²⁰ Guilty himself, the high priest

19 There is a good analysis of the way Grillparzer reveals the inner thoughts of his characters in Bruce Thompson, *A Sense of Irony. An Examination of the Tragedies of Franz Grillparzer* (Frankfurt/M. and Munich: Peter Lang, 1976). He also notes the use of the imagery of light throughout in his full study, *Grillparzer*, p. 68. See further Margaret E. Atkinson, "Grillparzer's Use of Symbol and Image in *Des Meeres und der Liebe Wellen*", *German Life and Letters* NS 4 (1950–1), 261–77 and Heinz Politzer, "Der Schein von Heros Lampe", *Modern Language Notes* 72 (1957), 432–7.

20 It has been noted that Grillparzer was not convinced of the human ability to perceive the divine will. See the interesting paper by Colin Walker, "The Light of the Gods in *Des Meeres und der Liebe Wellen*", in: *Essays on Grillparzer*, ed. Bruce Thompson and Mark Ward (Hull: New German Studies, 1978), pp. 37–46. Grillparzer wondered in his notes

is the human nemesis of Hero's guilt, and one must question where that guilt lies. She has certainly incurred guilt by breaking her vow. She may not have deserved that guilt, and may be so preoccupied by love that she does not even realise it, any more than she is aware that the reasons she entered the temple are questionable. But the fact of the guilt remains; this is a tragedy of Hero and her pretence of vocation, or rather, her assertion that a full vocation is not necessary. Her hubris is that she wishes to claim the benefits of solitude and composure whilst unable to achieve them. She could be seen as nun just as easily as a priestess of Aphrodite Urania. Although the image of the net is almost always associated with Leander — even by Hero herself — the net of tragic inevitability is in fact around Hero, and the death of Leander is part of her punishment. The high priest may be seen (as he sees himself) as the instrument of the gods, who knows what they want, and who is used to punish betrayal; but equally he is a man obsessed with controlling and maintaining an image of himself and his family, trying to convince himself that things are other than he really knows them to be, and obsessed at the end with little more than damage limitation. The tragedy, as Grillparzer wished to express in his title, is a general one: there are emotions — and love is only one of them — that are so forceful that they can and will destroy.²¹ “In the last resort, then, Hero's fateful love is revealed as the more typically feminine variant of a tragic incompatibility inherent in the whole human condition: the dichotomy of *Sammlung* and *Leben*.”²²

2 Grillparzer's Operas: Ernst Frank, *Hero*; Hermann Schroeder, *Hero und Leander*; Günter Bialas, *Hero und Leander* (1884–5, 1950, 1966)

Several operas have been based on Grillparzer's play in Austria and Germany. One by Ernst Frank (1847–1924) with a libretto by Ferdinand Vetter (who is not well known) was first performed in 1884 in Berlin, with the dramatic text retained to a large extent, but with some changes and reductions to accommodate three, rather than five acts. Vetter's libretto, which was published in

about the validity of nunneries, and was well aware of the links between Hero and a nun taking the veil. Nadler, *Grillparzer*, p. 172f. discusses this with reference to Grillparzer's biography.

21 See Wells, *Plays of Grillparzer*, p. 156. Wells expresses concern about what he sees as an overdone quest for symbols in this play (see his otherwise excellent analysis, pp. 69–82); while this might be valid in extreme cases, the comments by Papst, *Grillparzer*, p. 19f. on the inadequacy of words have to be borne in mind.

22 Papst, *Grillparzer*, p. 14f. The little study is an especially perceptive one. See also pp. 46–52 on dramatic structures.

1885, adopts many lines directly, while some speeches are turned into solo arias or duets. Nereids and tritons have been added, but Hero's parents are omitted entirely. The first two acts cover Grillparzer's first three, most of the fourth act is omitted, and the opera's final act is the catastrophe. More recently, Hermann Schroeder (1904–1984) produced a six-scene opera *Hero und Leander* "after Grillparzer" between 1944 and 1950, while the *Hero und Leander* of Günter Bialas (1907–1995) in seven scenes, with a text by Erich Spiess based on Grillparzer (and Musaios) was performed in Mannheim in 1966.²³

3 Louis Gustave Fortuné Ratisbonne, *Héro et Léandre* (1858)

The French writer Louis Ratisbonne (1827–1900) produced amongst a varied oeuvre which included even stories for children, a one-act *Héro et Léandre* in seven scenes of rhymed alexandrine couplets. It is rather different from Grillparzer's tragedy, although there are a few comparable points, and it is by no means unimpressive. It makes use of the classical versions, including Martial. The play contains only the two principals and a companion to Hero, Amylla, and was performed at the Théâtre-Français in Paris in December 1858 and published in the following year with the designation *drame antique*.²⁴ The text takes up less than thirty pages but offers a new and unusual perspective on the original story. Where in Grillparzer the gods (who play such a direct part in earlier versions) are too far away to be involved, whatever views humans might impose upon them, here they are seen either as completely indifferent to our most solemn vows, or actively malicious: they do not listen, or they kill us for their sport, or perhaps they do not even exist. At the close, the dying Hero declares: "Je ris de tes dieux!" (36, I laugh at your gods).

The opening exchange between Hero and Amylla is essentially a recapitulation of what has gone before as they wait by Hero's tower for the arrival of Leander. Hero is eager for the day to be over and the pair are anxious for Leander's safe arrival. Hero is sure that the gods will protect him, while Amylla is afraid of the wrath of Venus. They talk of the arrival of the people at the festival when the lovers met, and Hero recalls Leander's comparing her to the

23 Ernst Frank, *Hero. Oper in drei Akten*. Text nach Grillparzer's Drama bearbeitet von Ferdinand Vetter (Hanover: Schäfer, 1885) and online. Bialas's opera is available through the Bärenreiter Verlag, Kassel. The opera *Hero und Leander* (not seen) by the Austrian composer Franz Alfons Wolpert (1917–1978) may also be based on Grillparzer.

24 Louis Gustave Ratisbonne, *Héro et Léandre. Drame antique en 1. acte en vers* (Paris: Michel Lévy, 1859), also online. The text indicates a few passages which were not in the performed version. References are to page numbers.

goddess. Amylla, however, asks Venus to forgive her, recognising this as *hubris*, and noting that “la jeune prêtresse oublie son devoir” (11, the young priestess forgot her duty). She had tried to tell Leander that she was dedicated to Venus, but he had stayed. He has swum the Hellespont before, but because of the storms she has now told him not to come (as in Hero’s letter in Ovid), but they think they see something — a torn sail, or perhaps Leander. Hero tries to reassure herself that Leander has always honoured the gods — “il adorait toujours Neptune bienfaiteur” (16, he always worshipped Neptune the beneficent — this echoes Florian’s play), and then they see that it is indeed Leander. It is unclear whether he is alive or dead. Hero first curses the gods — “Dieux inflexibles et sourds”, rigid and deaf, — but then we come to the crux of the work, and Ratisbonne’s innovation. Hero swears a solemn oath that if he is saved, she will give up more than her life — she will give up her love:

Neptune! Cet amour que le destin m’envie,
Je l’immole! Qu’il vive, et, j’en fais le serment,
Ce coeur est à jamais fermé pour mon amant!
J’en jure par le Styx, par l’inférieur abîme. (17)

(Neptune! I shall sacrifice this love, which fate envies. If he lives — I swear the solemn oath — that this heart will be closed to my lover. I swear by the Styx, and by the abyss of hell.)

The oath, sworn on the river of death and hell itself, is extreme. His life is more important to her than her — or his — happiness. This unusual twist sets up a different conflict between Hero’s obligation to the gods and her desires.

Leander survives. Hero thanks Neptune, but Amylla reminds her several times of her oath, which the god had clearly heard. Hero assures her that she will remember it, and in the second scene declares to Neptune that she will see Leander again simply to bid him farewell. Leander knows nothing of this, of course, and greets her as *ma belle prêtresse*, she him as *cher époux*, beautiful priestess and dear husband. They embrace, and Leander declares his defiance of the sea and the storms, and of Neptune, at which Hero recalls her *vœu funeste* (20, disastrous oath) and warns him not to cross Neptune. Leander declares that her image will make him forget any perils, and that he has defied the very waves, saying “Ne me noyez qu’à mon retour” (21). Martial’s line that he should be drowned only on the way back is the second crucial point in the play. He has in effect made a vow, too, and he will be held to it.

Leander, telling how Hero’s flame guides him, cannot understand why she should be sad, and wonders if their love has faded. She assures him that she

loves him as much as ever, but is beset by a *trouble assez cruel* (23, a cruel problem), although she cannot tell him what the situation is, and in a final stichomythic passage at the end of the scene, Leander asserts his love, which is “*envié des dieux même*”, envied by the very gods, to which Hero responds: “*Les dieux sont contre nous*” (26, the gods are against us). He loves her, and she him, but what is separating them now — a *triste secret* (27), sad secret, — is something he is unable to understand. With Amylla reminding her that the gods will demand their price, Hero is forced to leave the still baffled Leander.

In a scene between the two of them, Amylla reveals to Leander the story of the despairing vow, *un voeu désespéré* (29) and tells him that he must give Hero up. His response is:

Noyez-moi maintenant, puisqu'il faut revenir,
Vagues de l'Hellespont! ...
Adieu l'amour! Adieu la vie! (30)

(Drown me now, since I must return, o waves of the Hellespont ... farewell to love! farewell to life!)

He asks, then, for the fulfilment of the familiar request to the waves, and he will indeed drown on the way back, though his body will be returned. A brief soliloquy from Amylla echoes Grillparzer's priest in her hope that Hero's pain will ebb away, and that time will heal: “*Le temps efface tout ... hormis le sacrilège*” (30, time wipes out all things ... except sacrilege). The thought is as misplaced for her as it was for the priest, given the depth of the love.

In a final scene between the two women, Hero is baffled that Leander has apparently left without a tear, then blames Amylla, and mourns for a love that apparently lasted for such a short time. She, however, will continue to love Leander, and hopes that he will return safely to his mother as a prop for her old age. In earlier versions Leander thinks of his family, and in Grillparzer his melancholy stems originally from the loss of his mother. Now, however, Amylla sees someone near their shore, when Leander is supposed to have returned to Abydos. There is confusion once again, as at the start — is it Leander, has he returned? The man is dead, and although Amylla tries to say that it is not Leander, Hero realises that it is, and she decides to die with him. Amylla begs for forgiveness and implores Hero to think of the goodness of the gods. But it is the gods who have done this. They have failed to listen, “*Et sauvaient mon amant pour mieux l'assassiner!*” (36, and saved the life of my lover in order to kill him all the more effectively), a concept found in a related context in the

monodrama of Florian. She curses the gods and dies with Leander. *Je ris de tes dieux*.

As with Grillparzer's play, Hero is at the centre, but the new element in the story increases her tragic situation, permitting her to save her lover's life only by relinquishing him. That it is too late to do so, that he has made a kind of request as well, exacerbates this. The gods are reviled, but both requests have been kept. Neptune spared Leander, as Hero had asked; he was drowned on his return, as he had asked.

4 Harold Kyrle Money Bellew, *Hero and Leander* (1890–92)

A poetic drama with accompanying music, presenting the story of Hero and Leander, apparently written by (Harold) Kyrle (Money) Bellew (1850–1911) and related to Grillparzer's tragedy was performed in Manchester and London in 1892, and before that in Australia. Although we have details of this work in performance, and there is much of interest here for the history of the tradition, and of Victorian theatre, there does not seem to be a text available. Kyrle Bellew (the name is sometimes misspelt Kyle) was an actor-manager (and at the end of his life a performer in silent films), whose touring company performed in Australia, Britain and America. He was (as is clear from publicity photographs, several which survive, albeit not in the role of Leander) classically good-looking, and he played a number of male leads, including Hamlet, Anthony, and indeed Romeo. He took the role of Leander in performances of this play at the beginning of the 1890s, at which point he was already over forty. His (younger) leading lady, in the role of Hero, was the celebrated and equally striking-looking American society lady turned actress, Cora Urquhart Brown Potter (1857–1936).²⁵ Oscar Wilde saw her in performance and in his comments implied that her beauty and charm compensated for her less than spectacular acting skills. The play of Hero and Leander appears to have been first performed at the Princess Theatre in Melbourne on August 23, 1890, but after a production in Manchester on May 9, 1892 at the Prince's Theatre, it ran for fourteen performances at the Shaftesbury Theatre in London between June 2 and June 17 of that year.²⁶

25 Born in New Orleans, she married in New York and in London met the future Edward VII. After her separation from Brown Potter and her move to the stage she retained his name.

26 Michael and Joan Tallis, *The Silent Showman: Sir George Tallis* (Kent Town, S. Australia: Wakefield, 1999), p. 315 ("the first production anywhere in the world"). On the British

Reviews of this “poetic drama” with accompanying music and a ballet are for the most part polite, but no more than that: “pretty and inoffensive” is one of the judgements, and another commented on the length of time needed for the elaborate scenery to be changed. In the absence of a text it is impossible to go much further, but the relationship to Grillparzer, of whose tragedy this seems to be an adaptation, is interesting.²⁷ The cast includes Grillparzer’s Naukleros and Ianthe, as well as Aneros, Diros, Zesta, Zoe, Meta and Zella. The various female names may be of temple servants (and dancers? another review commented on how many there were), and the male names presumably include the high priest (the name Aneros seems to mean ‘no love’). In 1890, however, no published English translation of Grillparzer’s play was available — the earliest complete published version is that by Stevens in 1938. Elizabeth Dowden (1843–1932) in Dublin translated it (as *Hero and Leander*) in manuscript,²⁸ and there are long passages in English verse in the study by Gustav Pollak in 1907, but these all postdate Bellew’s play. Did Bellew encounter a German text in Melbourne, perhaps? Although both *Hero and Leander* and *Romeo and Juliet* were part of the repertoire for Kyrle Bellew and Cora Brown Potter, one suspects that the presentation (perhaps in both cases) would have been sentimental rather than tragic, the audiences expecting and getting (within a showy context) a pitiable, rather than a cathartic representation of the star-crossed or wave-tossed lovers. Grillparzer’s neo-classical tragedy seems to have become on the late nineteenth-century English stage, therefore, a music and dance entertainment (hence the number of parts taken by young women), a pretty and inoffensive vehicle showcasing two (well-established) Victorian matinee idols, designed to set hearts a-flutter and not to leave a dry eye in the house.

performances, see J. P. Wearing, *The London Stage 1890–1899* (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2nd ed. 2014), p. 122, with details of reviews and the cast. It was widely noticed.

27 Thus Burkhard, *Grillparzer in England and America*, p. 19, in the chapter “Grillparzer Performances in England and America”. He refers to “two performances” of Bellew’s work, but this presumably means the Manchester single performance and the London run. The link with Grillparzer means that it can be discussed here rather than in the context of the musical versions.

28 The date is unclear. See Arthur Burkhard, “Elizabeth Dowden’s Grillparzer Translations”, in: *Österreich und die angelsächsische Welt*, ed. Otto Hietsch (Vienna and Stuttgart: Braumüller, 1961–8), II, 598–613. There is a facsimile of a (somewhat unpromising) page from *Hero and Leander* on plate 49. The manuscripts are in the National Library of Ireland (MS 223). See also John Hennig, “A Note on Elizabeth Dowden’s Grillparzer Translations”, *Modern Language Review* 52 (1957), 576f.

5 Martin Schütze, *Hero and Leander* (1908)

Martin Schütze (1866–1950) was a professor of German at the University of Chicago who, a few years after publishing his own drama of *Hero and Leander*,²⁹ also edited that by Grillparzer. His play is clearly influenced by and responds to some of the perceived weaknesses of that of Grillparzer, although the cast is augmented and changed somewhat. The *dramatis personae* includes not only Grillparzer's Naukleros (the relationship of the two young men is clarified), but Leander's parents (rather than Hero's), an elderly friend of his father, Leander's sister Gyrinno, and her lover. Another young man, Klyton, and the temple-maid Chrysa in Sestos, with whom he is in love, serve as parallels for the protagonists. Philanthë (rather than Ianthë) is Hero's attendant, and the priest of the temple and Hero's uncle is here given the name Hierophon. Guards, maids, the populace and, intriguingly, "a madman" (who has a not unimportant role) make up the rest of the cast. It is unclear whether the work, which is mostly in blank verse, with some characters speaking prose, was ever performed. Some passages imitate Grillparzer very closely indeed, as in the scenes where the priest conducts Hero to her tower, or the guard reports having seen a man swimming, and especially in the somewhat awkward scene in which Naukleros tries to prevent Leander from returning to Sestos, and at times Schütze seems concerned to clarify aspects of Grillparzer work. The gods have an even more questionable role.

Grillparzer had portrayed the first encounter between Hero and Leander as pure accident and as an overwhelming love at first sight. Schütze prepares things very differently, whilst retaining the "just too late" irony of the meeting. Hero and Leander had been together in Abydos, we hear, and were expected to marry. However, Leander had gone away, and when he returns, he discovers that Hero has committed herself to the temple. This is a different motivation on her part, and until she meets Leander again she appears better at convincing herself that she does have the vocation to follow her uncle into the family tradition of service to the goddess.

The whole of the first act, set during a love-festival (the festival of the blossoms) in Abydos forms a counter to the festival in Sestos at which Hero will be dedicated, but it also supplies the background for the relationship of the

29 Martin Schütze, *Hero and Leander. A Tragedy* (New York: Henry Holt, 1908) and online. The five-act tragedy is dedicated to his wife, the photographer Eva Watson Schütze. He wrote some poetry and another tragedy, *Judith* (1910). His papers are archived at the University of Chicago.

couple. Leander returns in mid-festival after three years of adventures (during which, we hear, he had saved Naukleros's life), but discovers to his horror that Hero has decided (persuaded, he thinks, by her uncle) after his years of absence (so that he feels some guilt) to become a priestess. At the start we have been introduced already to Klyton, who is in love with a temple-maiden, and who hints that he might try to carry her off. This all prepares us for the main action. The act ends with the enthusiastic decision of all the young men — youth is stressed — to go with Leander to Sestos and fetch Hero back. Their elders, however, are concerned: the priest is a great man, violence can beget violence, and there must be peace between the two cities. Leander's father, who charges Naukleros to be careful, exclaims: "I fear disaster", while his mother adds more solicitously: "My son! The Gods be with you!" as the curtain falls.

The stage setting of the second act recalls Grillparzer's temple, though without Amor and Hymenaeus. The directions also call for apple-trees in blossom, echoing the Abydos blossom-festival, which has overtones of fertility,³⁰ and which Hero will herself later recall in a song about that blossom (mirroring the song of Leda and the swan in Grillparzer). For the moment, however, the atmosphere is solemn, and Hero and the priest are presumed to be inside the sanctuary, preparing themselves spiritually for the ceremony. Onlookers comment that "they have been praying a long time", that Hero looked beautiful, and that "it must be wonderful to overcome all desires and be like an immortal spirit". It is noted too that the priest looked radiant and full of delight (all p. 44). When they emerge, the central ceremony begins, as Hero, crowned with myrtle, commits herself to her quasi-marriage to the goddess. The priest is about to make the final statement — "Thou now art ..." when Leander interrupts, claiming a right to speak. Hero "gives the impression" — thus the stage direction — "of having been stunned by a sudden blow."

Leander demands that Hero remember her vows to him. The priest objects, but Hero says nothing, standing still "as if not comprehending what is passing before her", as Leander asserts that the gods have already joined them together. This Leander is eloquent and dominant, resists the attempts by the priest to interrupt him, and is quite unlike Grillparzer's reticent Leander. But Hero does not support his claim, and the priest says:

The Guardian of the Shrine
Chooses the sharper emphasis of silence.
Take that for answer. (p. 53)

30 See the Pindaric ode cited by Seltman, *Twelve Olympians*, p. 83, on the blossoms. The imagery is straightforward enough, and the two festivals contrast nicely.

Hero is clearly shaken, but eventually manages to say that she has forsworn the world. The priest calls the guards, and Leander claims that the priest has played upon Hero's grief. However, the guards force the Abydians off stage, and the priest completes the ceremony, formally consecrating Hero, who still behaves mechanically. The madman, a former disciple of the priest, talks incomprehensibly about "the Great Nothing", and Leander then confronts the priest alone, demanding to speak with Hero. The priest comments on the youth of the pair:

Youth is ever prone
To endow the passing moment with eternal
Validity, and clothe each painful loss
With tragic splendour, begging the future
To make a tyrant of its nursling past. (p. 64)

Naukleros takes Leander away, and the audience is told that Hero's tower is guarded by reefs and jagged rocks in a "seething current", unreachable by boat or by swimmer.

The third act is very close to Grillparzer's second act, as the priest introduces Hero to her solitary quarters. She says little until he leaves, then says to herself: "Is this thy countenance, fulfilment? This/ Thy peace, attainment?" (p. 75). She wonders to herself about inner composure, Grillparzer's *Sammlung*, and contrasts her situation with the visions of the future she had shared with Leander. As darkness falls she lights her lamp and Chrysa, a temple girl, is heard singing the song of apple blossoms. Hero recognises her and the song, recalls the festival and begins to sing the song herself, stopping suddenly when she realises what she is doing. Aware of her feelings, she asks why Leander did not return earlier, or why he returned at all, then takes a grip on her feelings and hopes that Leander can be her friend.

Leander himself now enters. Hero is startled, and the stage direction might well defeat any performer, given that she is required to speak "in a voice and attitude in which terror, joy, and an adverse determination mingle" (p. 82). The extended dialogue between the two is, it must be said, overblown and a little pompous. Hero asks, for example:

Are Love's offices
Wholly encompassed by the narrow sphere
Of creature ministry? The pettiness
And degradation of small services
Sole keepers of Love's blessings? (p. 86f.)

That example is perhaps unfair, but the balanced speeches break down, as Hero finds it too hard to deny Leander, and gives way to their love. At this point a temple guard is heard ordering her to put out the light, and Leander explains to her that he had used it to guide his swim through the treacherous rocks. This is a refinement of the basic theme: a boat could not navigate the last part, hence Leander has to swim. The lamp becomes significant as the temple guard now insists (while Leander hides) that it be put out. As in Grillparzer, the guards are aware that one of the Abydan youths has been in the grounds. Leander and Hero embrace, surrendering to their past, rather than to new love. The focus now moves to Klyton of Abydos, who is taken prisoner with the temple girl Chrysa. Each of them claims to have led the other astray, and Hero will have to pass judgement on them. Dawn breaks, and we return to Hero as she bids farewell to Leander. They are now completely absorbed in each other, recalling in rapid stichomythia, which contrasts with the earlier set-piece speeches, the way they once loved. Leander sets off, but guards run towards the shore pointing out to sea as the curtain falls on the act.

The fourth act cannot but be compared with Grillparzer's controversial equivalent. There is anxiety in Abydos that Leander could provoke conflict between the two cities, but he himself co-opts Naukleros for "another venture" (p. 125). At first relieved that a new undertaking will take his mind off Hero, he is shocked to gather that Leander plans to take a ship to Sestos and abduct Hero, swimming the last part. Naukleros does his best to dissuade him, and the pair nearly come to blows (as in Grillparzer), but the awkwardness is averted as Leander asks for assistance in the name of friendship, and Naukleros agrees. The second scene returns us to Sestos, where Hero has refused to pass judgement on Klyton and Chrysa, and the case is deferred. She withdraws, and the temple guards inform the priest that a man was seen leaving Hero's tower; it is soon established that this was Leander. When again a light is seen in Hero's window, the priest orders her to extinguish it. She refuses, they struggle, and the priest removes the lamp. She confesses that Leander will be fighting the seas and will die if the light fails. The priest replies "I cannot save him./ But you, I will" (p. 147). Hero's despairing "Blackness ... Blackness!" echoes Grillparzer (*kein Licht*), and she is carried off in a state of collapse as the noise of the storm increases. Quite unlike Grillparzer (or any other version), however, is the ensuing encounter between the priest and the madman, who continues to talk about "the Great Nothing", the dark emptiness which is the opposite of love. The priest is exhibiting "an increasing mad fascination" with what the madman has to say, and the madman's last words to the priest are the curiously biblical "Do you wish to extinguish the Light of the World?" (p. 156). Shaken by this, the priest leaves to seek answers in prayer to the eternal gods. But the

nothingness remains. Now the guards note that the storm is abating, say that it would have been dangerous out at sea, and, passing Hero's tower, comment casually that "the priestess is raving mad in there".

The final act is short. Hero and Philanthë (who speaks in prose) walk by the shore, Philanthë talking cheerfully about life and the cleansing value of the storm. As in many places, Hero tries to convince herself that Leander never set out, that the lamp was extinguished too soon, that by removing the light the priest was really "guarding him/ From death, and me from murder. In that sea/ No light would have availed" (p. 168). She sends her maid to find the priest, but then finds Leander's body. Complaining that he has not waited for her, she draws his dagger (once more he was patently not swimming naked; Ovid's repeated insistence on that detail is less suited to the stage) and kills herself. She does this in some earlier texts, as in the *istòria* by Joan Roiç de Corella, but it is more probably linked here with the last act of *Romeo and Juliet*. The priest, initially confident that all is well, finds her dead, and comments that the Gods have spoken, but that their sentence is too heavy for him, and at the end he confesses that "This joinèd death holds for you more of worth/ Than the great life I planned for you!" (p. 172f.). He orders the release of Klyton and Chrysa, and commands Naukleros, who has come for Leander, to take Hero as well, and that their ashes shall be joined. The play ends with a chant by Naukleros's men, ending on the idea that "Love is the sacred guardian of Life,/ Knowing the deepest purpose of the Gods" (p. 176).

Much of this play is a tribute to Grillparzer and matches his work closely, with some parts patently concerned to iron out perceived imperfections. Schütze's principal change is to the figure of Leander, and he aims presumably for a greater realism by pre-establishing the love. A smaller point of clarification is the relationship between Naukleros and Leander. Grillparzer himself was worried about his own drawing of the priest, however, and there are still problems with this figure in Schütze's play. Hero's doomed attempt to reach a state of composure is dealt with more briefly than by Grillparzer, but the figure of the madman and his presentation of the "Great Nothing" which is the opposite of love and life, and which the priest has to face, is less than clear. It is an open question of why Schütze decided to write a separate work rather than venturing a translation.

6 Arturo Ambrosio, *Ero e Leandro* (1910)

The conciseness of the story is perhaps the reason that it has not really been the subject of films. In 1910, however, the Italian pioneer film-maker Arturo

Ambrosio (1870–1960) produced a short silent film based upon the late nineteenth-century libretto of Arrigo Boito's *Ero e Leandro* (the operas using it by Bottesini and Mancinelli are discussed in another chapter).³¹ This is clear from the dominant role of the high priest, here referred to as the Archon, as in the opera. Grillparzer's play probably influenced Boito's libretto to an extent, even though his high priest is far subtler there than he becomes in Boito and hence in the film, where he tries to press himself upon Hero.

As in Boito's libretto, then, Hero, the young and beautiful priestess, rejects the amorous advances of the priest, and when she gives Leander a laurel crown at the festival they fall in love. The high priest sees this, follows them and has her punished and Leander banished. However, Leander swims to her regularly until the jealous priest realises and extinguishes the torch, causing the death of Leander in the darkness. The high priest, then, is again the human answer to why the light is extinguished, but his motives here are those of Boito's Archon rather than Grillparzer's high priest, where there was no sexual motivation and he is in any case her uncle. Some earlier works introduce rivals to Leander for Hero's love, sometimes noble in the latter case; and we may even recall, though the link is surely just coincidental, that clan of lascivious and depraved priests dreamed up by Brookes More for the purposes of his ballad.

7 Conclusion

Grillparzer rightly dominates the modern literary reception of theme with a great work with which, ironically, the author himself was never satisfied. But his high priest is a new character of importance, an embodiment of principle for its own sake, an agent for the tragedy, and a fallible human being. A reasonably competent work of admiration by Schütze, a watered-down entertainment, and even a film all seem to descend from Grillparzer's work in different ways, the last more tangentially by way of Boito's libretto. Still comparable with *Des Meeres und der Liebe Wellen* in some respects, Ratisbonne's barely known play offers — surprisingly — another new twist to the narrative, placing guilt upon Hero not for breaking her vow to Venus, as is hinted in the play, but because she is trapped by Neptune into a vow that saves Leander, although he is

31 See (with a shot from the film) the details under *Hero and Leander* on the Internet Movie Database (imdb.com). The main parts were played by Mary Cleo Tarlarini and Alberto Capozzi. The National Museum of Cinema in Turin has a restored version (and their website has a further shot from the film). The work is occasionally referred to in studies of (early) cinema, such as Jon Solomon, *The Ancient World in the Cinema* (New Haven and London: Yale UP, 2001), p. 4.

unable to live without her and she without him. These plays all pose the question of whether the gods, if they exist at all anywhere other than in the minds of men, are too far above humanity to be more than ideological markers (or personifications of the storm), or whether they are as malicious as Gloucester thinks they are in *King Lear* — “As flies to wanton boys, are we to the gods; They kill us for their sport”, — saving Leander to kill him (and Hero) so much more effectively later. Grillparzer, Ratisbonne and Schütze all increase the irony in different ways with variations on the story: the pair meet at the very moment Hero takes her vows; she has to reject Leander because of a vow to save him; and she had dedicated herself because she thought (like some of Ovid’s other letter-writers) that she had been abandoned.

Choice Pieces of Drollery: the Burlesques

Leander, he would have lived many a fair year, though Hero had turned nun, if it had not been for a hot midsummer night; for, good youth, he went but forth to wash him in the Hellespont and being taken with the cramp was drowned and the foolish coroners of that age found it was 'Hero of Sestos.' But these are all lies: men have died from time to time and worms have eaten them, but not for love.



Rosalind's cynical summary to Orlando in Act IV of *As You Like It* spells out the important point that a tragic story can be mocked simply by refusing to take its basic premises at face value: Leander died of cramp, and not for love (some writers do, in fact, combine the two ideas). The narrative of Hero and Leander has been the target for a great number of more elaborate comic treatments from Shakespeare's time onward in a variety of languages, styles and genres, so that the comedy of Hero and Leander, occasionally with an obviously artificial happy-end or a comic metamorphosis, constitutes a large part of the enduring tradition. The closeness of the different treatments may be illustrated by Thomas Hood, who, beside his long and serious ballad, also published a neat little punning squib in *The Gem* in 1829,¹ based on an engraving, and probably a direct parody of Keats's sonnet, asking

Why, Lady, why
So in love with dipping?
Must a lad of Greece
Come over all dripping?

Classifying the individual comic versions can be difficult. It is not always appropriate to use the word 'parody', for example, at least not without qualification. Parody is essentially corrective: it seizes upon elements within a given

¹ Sara Lodge, *Thomas Hood and Nineteenth Century Poetry* (Manchester and New York: Manchester UP, 2007), p. 66.

narrative or style, and by change or exaggeration draws attention to any flaws or weaknesses. Peter Hutchinson, in a study of authorial manipulation, has the revealing chapter-title: "Parody, Travesty, Burlesque, Pastiche, Hoax, Spoof", and he makes clear just how fluid the distinctions can be. Indeed, 'burlesque' and 'travesty' are probably the most useful in our context.² These imply a simpler reductive or caricature variation on the theme as such, possibly mocking individual elements in an absolute rather than a corrective sense, as pure comedy, therefore. In an attempt towards working definitions of comedy, travesty and parody a single example, quite unrelated to our theme, may be useful. The *Harvard Lampoon* version of Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*, with the comic-imitative title *Bored of the Rings*, has the two central characters rescued after destroying the ring, by an eagle, as in the original. In the *Harvard Lampoon* version the eagle presents itself as a pink-painted aircraft, which is simply comic or absurd; that the eagle's name here is Gwahno rather than Gwaihir is a burlesque or travesty, perhaps also a parody on Tolkien's love of Celtic names; however, that it is labelled "Deux ex Machina Airlines" is parodic, drawing attention to Tolkien's narrative device for getting his characters out of trouble.³

- 2 Peter Hutchinson, *Games Authors Play* (London and New York: Methuen, 1983), pp. 91–6. See also more detailed analyses of parody, such as Linda Hutcheon, *A Theory of Parody* (New York and London: Methuen, 1985), which concentrates on modern materials, or as a general starting-point Moelwyn Merchant, *Comedy* (London: Methuen, 1972). A related instance of what is either a burlesque on a known theme and/or a parody of high tragic drama is the rustics' play of Pyramus and Thisbe in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (and in Andreas Gryphius's German baroque comedy *Herr Peter Squenz*), which depends for its comedy upon knowledge of the original story by both the inner and outer audiences. See Schmitt von Mühlenfels, *Pyramus und Thisbe*, a study which looks at Ovid, at the demonstration of the power of love, and then at the turn towards the comical. An eighteenth-century German imitation of Shakespeare has the rustics perform a play of *Hero and Leander* as a comedy: see Karl Goedeke, *Grundriß zur Geschichte der deutschen Dichtung* VIII (Dresden: Ehlermann, 1905, repr. Berlin: Akademie, 2011), p. 428; Goedeke lists reworkings of the theme in the context of Grillparzer's play, the title of which was also imitated and twisted in a parody of what was felt to be pretentiousness. I have not included texts which use the narrative as tangential allusion, as in the poem "Der Leander von der Traun" by Joseph von Hammer(-Purgstall) (1774–1856), which is about the scenery around the river Traun in Styria/ Upper Austria: *Mahlerisches Taschenbuch für Freunde interessanter Gegenden, Natur- und Kunst-Merkwürdigkeiten der Österreichischen Monarchie*, vol. 3 (Vienna: Doll, 1814), edited by Franz Sartori (1782–1832). Some possibly relevant texts were simply not available to me: these include J. G. Jacobi, *Leander und Seline ParadePlatz* in the *Göttingsche Anzeigen von gelehrten Sachen* (1765), apparently a mock-Heroide; *Der neue Leander in Apollonion: ein Taschenbuch zum Vergnügen und Literatur* (Vienna) 1809; and a text in *Beckers Erholungen* 2 (1801).
- 3 Henry N. Beard and Douglas C. Kenney, *Bored of the Rings. A Parody of J. R. R. Tolkien's "The Lord of the Rings"* (New York: Signet, 1969), p. 154. Straightforward deflation or dismissal, as by Rosalind, falls outside the range entirely. Terry Pratchett allows a character in one of his

In the story of Hero and Leander the constants of the narrative do not necessarily lend themselves to actual parody, although some of the open questions invite comic answers as well as serious ones. Why does Leander have to swim? Paul Scarron and others offer the obvious solution: he hasn't got a boat. How is it that no-one ever notices Hero's (wind-prone) lamp, or Leander's regular visits? What Rosalind offers in *As You Like It* is a travesty of the whole tale, where Leander drowns not because of the gods, nor the elements, but because of a simple cramp which has nothing to do with Hero, and this approach (and that unheroic cramp) is found fairly regularly. The real sticking-point for any travesty, however, is that there is a tragic ending to the basic narrative. Comic details may be filled in as the story progresses: Hero can be a maid in a hostelry called "The Tower" or her parents may be comically described, but there is a real challenge in mocking the tragic ending, and the comic focus is often upon post-mortem possibilities. The metamorphoses into birds or plants found in serious versions may be subverted, as Leander is turned in different comic versions into a ling or a crab, and Hero into a herring or a flounder. Individual versions of the tale, or elements within them, such as Ovid's epistolary exchange, can attract specific parody, as can some of the accretions, such as the profusion of sea-gods and their actions. It must always be borne in mind, however, that for parody to be effective, the story as such, or in specific cases the original of any classical or later version needs to be known to the audience.

Comic versions can in terms of style pick on pretentious or overly portentous presentations in their more serious counterparts (especially of storms and tempests, perhaps), or they may mock sententious, moralising or platitudinous comments about love. Many comic versions are simply linguistic jokes, bringing the elevated style appropriate to a tragic tale from classical antiquity down with a bump, either by relocating events into unlikely places, telling them in the wrong register, using unusual words, or just by cutting things short. Quevedo, for example, offers a deliberately over-concise summary which contrasts with some of the enormously extended representations of the outcome.

The range of genres used for a comic treatment of the theme is just as large as for the serious versions. The *ad hoc* burlesques of the story by Thomas Nashe and Ben Jonson respectively are parts of other works, rather than being free-standing, but there are plenty of independent comic versions, in English,⁴ French, German and Spanish in prose, verse, and drama. Texts such as the

novels simply to wonder, after a performance of what is clearly an equivalent to *Romeo and Juliet*, why nobody thought of taking her pulse.

4 There is a good discussion of English comic versions in the useful study by Booth, "Hero's Afterlife". He includes most of the English texts discussed here.

English broadside ballads or the musical travesties might easily have been included in this chapter, too, but are treated elsewhere, as indeed are a few retellings of the tale which look comic (and certainly have that effect), but which simply reflect ineptitude on the part of the author. Finally, more serious approaches can have deliberate comic elements within them, most notably Marlowe's version, which is sometimes, indeed, referred to as a "comic poem". Making the distinction becomes even more difficult in the modern period, and how we are to take Feuchtenberger's graphic version or Pavić's novel is a matter of debate. A modern German poem by Heinz Erhardt, however, places the classical story neatly into the context of a joke and treats it both as burlesque and as parody (of Ovid this time). It will serve well to conclude this chapter.

1 Thomas Nashe: *Nashe's Lenten Stuffe* (1599)

Thomas Nashe (sometimes Nash, 1567–1601) produced a prose burlesque in his *Lenten Stuffe*, a mock-heroic work in *Prayse of the Red Herring* and of the herring fleet, which he wrote in Yarmouth, to which town he had retreated from prosecution in London.⁵ What he gives is a travesty, with a parodistic variation of the motif of unity in death; here the dead lovers are turned into fish, but not united alive at sea, rather in death (again!) on the table as cooked fish in Lent, when meat is not eaten, and where they are joined by the old nurse, metamorphosed into mustard.

Nashe gives us a reason for the separation of the lovers: parental hostility and the antagonism of their two towns, "that like Yarmouth and Leystoffe [Lowestoft] were still at wrig-wrag". Most of the fun of the piece is in the language, and the contrast between the tragic content and the way it is put is made with ebullient extravagance. Leander, who dares not take a ship, is driven "to play the didopper and ducking water-spaniel to swim to her ... by owle light". Hero, accompanied by her ancient nurse ("a toothlesse trotte") is a priestess, and Nashe also points up as a flaw one of the serious contradictions in the story (and played on by Leander himself on occasion), that it is illogical to serve the goddess of love and refrain from love. Hero is cloistered "that she might liue chaste vestal priest to Venus the queene of vnchastitee". Her parents

5 *The Complete Works of Thomas Nashe*, ed. Alexander Grosart (London: Private Circulation, 1883–4), vol. v contains the text (cited), and the relevant section is on pp. 262–70. There is another edition of *The Works of Thomas Nash*, ed. Ronald B. McKerrow (London: Bullen, 1904–5), with the text in vol. III, and a reprint of Nashe's text with a biography (Laurel, Mississippi: Audubon Press and Christian Book Service, 2013). See on the work Andrew Hadfield, "Lenten Stuffe: Thomas Nashe and the Fiction of Travel", *Yearbook of English Studies* 41 (2011), 68–83.

are also criticised for making her a chaste priestess when they, in producing her, were clearly not chaste. Fate, however, is inescapable, but the metaphor is less than classical: "Fate is a spaniel that you cannot beate from you, the more you think to crosse it, the more you blesse it and further it". Leander comes to Hero — "O ware a naked man" warns Nashe — and Hero warms him, so that we reach the erotic moment: "This scuffling or bopeep in the darke they had awhile without weame or bracke". But they will be divided when Leander, unable to resist coming to Hero, gets a "belly full of fish-broathe" (culinary language persists) and his "dead carcase, well bathed and parboyled" is tossed upon the shore. Hero, who has dreamt that they are both at the bottom of the sea, finds his corpse ("sodden to haddocks meate") and attempts to "clap a kiss" on "his blue jellied sturgeon lippes", when the waves sweep him away. The tide goes out and takes him back to Abydos, and Hero, true to the constants of the tale, drowns herself, prompting a literary in-joke. She "spra[n]g after him, and so resign'd vp her Priesthood, and left worke for *Musaeus* and *Kit Marlowe*". In a dig at the pathetic fallacy, all nature mourns them in the style now well established, so that Phoebus and his chariot is not just delayed, but somewhat reduced: "The sunne was so in his mumps vppon it, that it was almost noone before hee could go to cart that day".

They are, of course, divided in death, and Nashe makes sure that this is underlined, although he does have a metamorphosis which is a parody of those works in which they become goldfinches or an oleander. Leander becomes a Ling, which swims off Iceland, Hero a Cadwallader Herring, so that they do not meet in the sea, but only on the table in Lent, still accompanied by the mustard-transformed nurse. The tale fits well into Nashe's overall mock-heroic praise of Yarmouth, and the style, especially the deliberately incongruous and fish-related vocabulary, is effective. The constants are not changed: Leander swims and they are both drowned, though there is no lamp.

2 Ben Jonson, *Bartholomew Fair* (1614)

The treatment of Hero and Leander by Ben Jonson (1572–1637) may be taken out of strict chronological sequence because it is hard to fit into any context. *Bartholomew Fair*, which is a rambling play in any case, contains in the fifth act a puppet play (commented upon by the characters) based on their story, albeit mixed with a version of the tale of the two friends Damon and Pythias (and Dionysius, who, although a puppet, has a major part in the actual action).⁶

⁶ The first folio edition of Jonson's plays notes that this play was performed in 1614. Texts are available online and in print. Ben Jonson, *Bartholomew Fair*, ed. Carroll Storrs Alden (New

The puppet-play appears at the end of the work, and in its introduction Leander works for his father, a dyer at Puddle-Wharf, which serves as the play's Abydos, while Bankside, across the Thames, "is our Sestos". Hero, who has become the wench from Bankside, comes past in a sculler and is captivated by Leander's "naked leg and goodly calf," over which she casts "a sheep's eye and a half". Cupid, with the help of a great deal of drink (sherry, in this case), brings them together, and the dialogue between puppet Leander and puppet Hero is explicit:

O Leander Leander my dear my Leander,
I'll forever be thy goose, so thou'lt be my gander.

And sweetest of Geese, before I go to bed
I'll swim over the Thames, my goose, thee to tread.

He asks that she set up a candle stub, but she retorts that "I should handle/ My matters very ill, if I had not a whole candle".

Other characters add their comments, Hero is just as eagerly amorous as Leander, and the involvement of Damon and Pythias confuses things even more. The play-within-a-play is broken up by the character Busy, who claims that play-acting involves cross-dressing and is thus an abomination, but the puppet Dionysius shows him that puppets are sexless (a nice joke after the patently sexual language of the Hero and Leander puppets), and Busy is defeated. Here the familiar narrative, with emphasis on the erotic aspects, is used as part of an extended joke at the expense of Puritan objections to performed drama. The substitution of the Thames for the Hellespont will recur in later burlesques.

3 The Spanish Burlesques

Just as there are several Spanish ballad/romances on the theme, there are also various burlesque versions, usually retaining the basic narrative, but telling it in a humorous manner, taking the edge from the seriousness by playing with additions and verbal games. Further, there is an overlap between serious and comic versions, so that the decision under which heading to treat individual

York: Holt, 1904) is a good scholarly edition, also online, but as a transcript it is difficult to read (see pp. xvi–xviii on the Hero and Leander plot and the puppet play in general). More convenient is the text in *Everyman's Library*: Ben Jonson, *Plays*, ed. Felix E. Schelling (London: Dent, 1910), vol. 11. The puppet play appears in Act v, scene iv.

texts can be arbitrary. One of those by Quevedo treated here might have been included amongst the serious versions, as might the *Fábula d'Hero y Lleandro* by the Asturian Antón González Reguera (or de Marirreguera). It is not always possible to convey the full effect of the linguistic humour of notable word-smiths like Góngora. There are also shorter burlesque pieces in Spanish, including a two-quatrains squib by Alonso Jerónimo de Salas Barbadillo (1581–1635), and even one within the extensive and otherwise serious tradition of Leander-sonnets in the Spanish baroque by Mateo Vázquez de Leca (1542–91), which has a motif used also by Quevedo. The sonnet, beginning with the exclamatory “Cuerpo de Dios ...” (God’s body; cf. ‘Odds bodkins’) ends, after the deaths of the lovers, with the summary: “Y cenose el diablo el par de huevos” (and the devil dined on this couple of eggs).⁷

4 Luis de Góngora y Argote, *Romance/Poema burlesca* (1589, 1610)

The Cordoban aristocrat Luis de Góngora (1561–1627) is celebrated as the initiator (or the best-known practitioner) of the style named after him, gongorism, which William Entwistle (who calls it a “stylistic vice”) categorized neatly by telling us how he “latinized his syntax, increased his vocabulary, complicated his allusions and subtilized his expression to the point of passing beyond the comprehension of a careless listener”. On the other hand, it has also been noted that Góngora merged this exaggerated classical tradition with that of the Spanish ballad/romancero, such that (in the words of Elias L. Rivers) his “satirical and burlesque poetry perhaps bridges the gap between those two traditions”.⁸

Góngora’s mock-heroic romance of the tale of Hero and Leander is imitated and cited in later versions. It survives in two parts, and the dating is problematic: the first part of the story seems to be dated 1610, the second portion earlier, 1589. The 1589 text begins “Arrojóse el mancebito” (The young man threw himself ...) and has 96 lines, the 1610 (with reference to Musaios and echoes

7 Salas Barbadillo’s poem, where fame seems to exculpate the excesses of the couple, is in Moya del Baño, p. 246. The sonnet is in the collection made in 1605 by Pedro Espinosa, *Primera Parte de las Flores de Poetas Ilustres de España* (Valladolid: Luys Sanchez, 1605), pp. 51v–52r (available in several places online). The modern slang implications of *huevos* are not relevant.

8 Entwistle’s comments are in: “Spanish Literature to 1681”, in: *Spain: a Companion to Spanish Studies*, ed. J. Allison Peers (London: Methuen, 5th ed. 1956), pp. 88–154, see p. 127. Rivers’s is in his introduction to the translation by Gilbert F. Cunningham of *The Solitudes* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1968), p. xvi.

of Boscán), which opens “Aunque entiende pico Griego” (While understanding little Greek ...), has 220.⁹ It is appropriate to take the two parts together in the narrative order. The comedy is based on ironies, additions, anachronisms and allusions, exaggerated terminology and images, different takes on the constants, and new situations, as well as straightforward jokes and even scatology.¹⁰

“Although I do not understand much Greek”, the speaker tells us, he has still read Musaios on the tale of two lovers who are both poor, since she was in want of a proper lantern, while he didn’t own a boat (1–8). The lovers and their families, while still Greek, are provided with Hispanic dress, although this is less than impressive in the case of Doña Hero’s *hidalgo* father, who is “Mal vestido i bien barbado” (badly dressed and well bearded, 12). But her mother is treated even less kindly; she is a fine Greek lady, a *buena Griega* (a line used by a later writer), but “Con mas partos i postpartos/ Que una braca” (13f. who has given birth more times than a cow). Their behaviour in church also varies; *señora madre* is devout, but *señor padre* is described as a *poltrón*, an idler, 159, because he falls asleep there. Scarron has this idea in fuller form when the gentleman’s trumpeting snores cause mayhem. Here the two lovers are able to speak in the church because the mother is busy praying and the father is asleep. While much of the language is overblown in the long descriptions of the pair as they gradually come together at the festival, Leander’s less than noble father, albeit poor but honest, is described as a *grande orinado de esquina*, a great pisser on the corner (39), a motif picked up again later in a more cosmic sense when the clouds perform that function on the water that separates the pair. This is not the stormy Hellespont, but a *charco de atunes* (11, 1), a fishy puddle.

The narrative moves more or less from the first decision to swim, to the fatal night in the second part, beginning with Leander hurling himself into the sea (divesting himself of his fine blue trousers, 11, 6), and following the all too slender light — a candle, since Hero has no lantern. The night is violent, and the rain-clouds are, as indicated, literally pissing down (*se orinaron las nubes*, 11, 16). Leander drowns, and the winds bring his body *de su costumbre* (11, 58,

9 There is a print edition (also online) of the *Obras Poéticas de D. Luis de Góngora* (New York: Hispanic Society of America, 1921), 1, 119–22 (nr 75) and 340–347 (nr 228) — the works are in chronological order. This edition is cited by line-number for each poem. The notes refer to the principal manuscript of Góngora’s works by Antonio Chacón, now in the National Library in Madrid. Moya del Baño places the two texts together in the narrative order, *El Tema*, pp. 247–54, as does Krummrich in his translation.

10 There is a good analysis of the comedy in the text by Erich Segal, “Hero and Leander: Góngora and Marlowe”, *Comparative Literature* 15 (1963), 338–56. Segal’s Humpty Dumpty comment, p. 242, is very much to the point, and he notes both the reduction of the Hellespont to a tuna-filled pond and the urinating clouds, p. 342f.

in their usual fashion) to Hero's shore. We have then a double epitaph: "Hero somos, i Leandro,/ No menos necios que illustres ..." (II, 85f. We are Hero and Leander, no less foolish than famous) because of what love did to them: "El amor, como dos huevos/ Quebrantó nuestras saludes" (II, 89f. love smashed us like two eggs) Erich Segal has commented nicely that the tragic tale, once celebrated in marble, has been turned into the smashed eggshell of Humpty Dumpty.

5 **Francisco Gómez de Quevedo y Santibáñez Villagas, *Romance de Hero y Leandro; Hero y Leandro en paños menores (La fábula de Hero y Leandro)* (Mid-17th Century)**

Another Castilian aristocrat and extremely prolific author, who was often critical of Góngora, Francisco Quevedo (1580–1645) produced several pieces on the theme, a sonnet and two longer burlesque poems, one of them in two versions.¹¹ The romance, in 56 lines only, falls, as Francesca Moya del Baño has indicated, somewhere between burlesque and non-burlesque in its treatment of the tale and she notes further that Góngora may have written *his* burlesque as a response to this. It is again florid in its concentration upon Leander's final struggles against Neptune and the forces of nature and the jealous gods, with Hero barely mentioned. The work concludes with Leander's death, but its brief and matter-of-fact conclusion presents all the elements of the narrative as a dead-pan summary:

De piedad murió la luz
 Leandro murió de amores
 Hero murió de Leandro
 Y amor de envidia muiríse

(The light died of pity, Leander died of love, Hero died of Leander, and love died of envy).

11 All are in Moya del Baño, p. 279 (the sonnet), p. 279f. (the *Romance*), pp. 279–84 (*Hero y Leandro en paños menores*), pp. 284–7 (the second version, *La fábula de Hero y Leandro* from MS 3.797, fol. 92f. in the National Library in Madrid). Citation is from this convenient edition. The sonnet is treated with the lyric. The sonnet, the romance and the longer version of the burlesque are translated in Krummrich. See Moya del Baño. p. 115f. on the various poems, the dating of which is difficult.

Far more clearly parodistic is Quevedo's *Hero y Leandro en paños menores* (translated by Krummrich as "Hero and Leander in Diapers"; it makes them more juvenile than ever), which exists in two versions, one with 184 lines and one of 172 lines, the latter known only in manuscript with the heading *La fábula de Hero y Leandro* (the tale of Hero and Leander). The differences, although there are some, are not great, however, and the first is cited here. Overall, the language is extravagant and sometimes absurd, and there are variations on the usual structure. Hero here is not a tower-dwelling priestess, but a servant-girl in an inn called The Tower, and she is interestingly described, "Corita en cogote/ y gallega en ancas" (with a Corinthian neck and a Galician rump). Later comments are even less flattering.

The story takes its course — Leander's address to the waves is less than effective, and Quevedo is a little casual about his demise: "¿se ahoga do veras?" does he really drown? — and both die:

Cual güevos murieron
Tonto y mentecata
Satanás los cene
Buen provecho le hagan

(Who dies, crazy and foolish? Satan dines on them. Bon appetit!)

The Satanic dinner was mentioned in the burlesque sonnet by Mateo Vázquez de Leca. The final quatrain, however, reminds the reader that this is a classical story after all:

La verdad es esta,
que no es patarata
aunque mas jarifa
Museo la canta.

(This is the truth, which is not nonsense, although Musaios sang it with more pizzazz).¹²

The other recension ends with Amor writing *con letra bastarda* (in *bastarda* script) the lines about the crazy fools dying, and he does so with a quill cut from one of his own wings.

¹² The less usual word *jarifa* is from the Arabic *šarīf*, meaning 'noble, of excellent quality', implying well-dressed, showily turned out. I have tried an approximation.

6 **García Medrano y Barrionuevo, *Ero y Leandro. Historia burlesca* (1631)**

The early seventeenth-century poet Medrano tells the story in a little under four hundred irregular rhymed lines.¹³ Like other burlesques before and after this, the technique is of gentle mockery of the serious narrative with occasional classical echoes, again using inconsequential additions, irrelevant asides, anachronisms, inappropriate colloquial expressions and comic or exaggerated vocabulary (as when Hero commits Heroicide at the end). Hero's beauty is described in the usual detail, but when we get to her hair:

Non se usó en aquel tiempo rubio el pelo
(así me lo contabo a mí mi abuelo)
de azbache el de Ero parecía ... (24–6)

(It wasn't normal at that time for hair to be blonde — so my grandfather told me — and Hero's seemed like jet).

She also tells her mother that she is looking for a husband, although on meeting Leander she does wonder if he is from Spain. The stress on nakedness in the classical versions is also nicely treated: “Se dijo a si Leandro: Ropa fuera!” (Leander said to himself: Clothes off!) and there is a reference to Hero and Eve in Paradise. In her prayers for Leander, Hero promises Venus (addressed rather liturgically as ‘mother of Cupid’) that she will hang up in her temple a votive wax *Leandrito*, while at the end “Heródes Ero de su misma vida/ Ser quiso Eroicida” (Heroic Hero seeks Heroicide for her own life) — the play is on *suicida* and *heroicidad* (‘heroism’).

7 **Antón González Reguera (Antón de Marirreguera), *Fábula d'Hero y Lleandro* (Mid-17th Century?)**

One of the first known modern writers in Asturian (the officially protected but not formally separate language spoken in Asturias, close to Galician and Portuguese), Antón González Reguera (ca 1605–ca 1662) is known under various combinations of parental and family names, including Antonio Álvarez, and he is recorded as Antonio González Moñiz (an uncle's name) as a parish priest in Albandi (in Carreño in Asturias), where he seems to have died in

¹³ The text is in Moya del Baño, *El Tema*, pp. 271–8, with a detailed discussion on pp. 106–12.

1661 or 2. His romance of Hero and Leander, again termed a *Fábula*¹⁴ is in 42 ottava rima stanzas (occasionally in cascade rhyme). The narrative is placed (like Reguera's other mythological tales) into an after-dinner story-telling context, with a reminder that this is an old tale from the land of the Greeks; Pyramus, Thisbe and Lucretia are also mentioned. There are some modern allusions and a very Spanish fiesta, as well as some striking and playful rhymes, but the overall effect is not too far from the traditional story, so that this version is again on the cusp of genres. Hero is very beautiful and kept by her father in a *torre de fierro muy severo* (a very strong iron tower, 14). The vigorous Leander sees her and asks her if she is a goddess. The story is told fairly economically; Leander drowns, and Hero says “¿pa qué quiero yo esta vida?”, why do I want to live, and throws herself like a madwoman from a rock (“como una lloca/ Sobre elli s'arroxó desde una roca”, 41).

The ending is abrupt, but there are comments about the tale as such, partly moralising and partly literary. We are told in the final stanza

Que los que viven mal, en mal acaben
Atrapólos la muerte descuidados
Cuando más á su salvo se gociaben.
¡Tan triste ye el final de enamorados!

(that those who live badly come to a bad end, death catching them being careless when they are most enjoying safety. How sad is the end of the lovers!)

They are to be buried in one tomb, and their story and their love written down.

8 **Francisco Nieto Molina, *La Fábula de Hero y Leandro*. Romance (1764)**

The romance by the Cadiz-born poet Francisco Nieto (de) Molina (1730–1774) from his collection of classical burlesques, *El Fabulero* rounds off the group of Spanish humorous versions of the narrative, even though it is considerably

14 It is online as part of the Caveda y Nava project to reproduce Asturian literature (asturies.com/cavedaynava), taken there from the *Poesías selectas en dialecto Asturiano*, ed. Xosé Caveda y Nava, rev. Fermin Canella (1887) and cited here by stanza-number. There is a translation in Krummrich.

later than the others.¹⁵ The text is only just over 200 lines in rhymed quatrains, and as Rafael Bonilla Cerezo points out, it adopts techniques from Góngora's burlesque, and indeed both cites him by name and borrows passages and ideas directly. Nieto also refers casually to other classical figures, plays with words and names (*cesto*, 'basket' and *Sestos*), sometimes even scatologically, and adds superfluous details. He follows Góngora in the formal designations of *Doña Hero* and *Don Leandro*, and when he says of Hero's mother that she is "una buena Griega/ En la lengua, y en el trato" (87, a fine Greek lady in language and in manner ...), the first line is from Góngora, whose continuation was, however, considerably less polite. Another technique, illustrated again by the borrowing of an entire line from Góngora, is the inconsequential denial of knowledge; when Leander sets out, we hear "No sé si a pie, ò à caballo" (89, I don't know if it was on foot or horseback). There are plenty of questions one might legitimately ask about the narrative, but that is probably not one of them. There is an overall similarity not just with Góngora but with other earlier Spanish burlesques, such as Medrano's, and also with the mid-seventeenth century version by Paul Scarron. The use of strikingly odd phrases or juxtapositions is another feature:

Mirandola vigilante,
Exclamò en acentos blandos
"¡O tù, fuego del amor,
que Salamandra idolatro!" (94)

(The vigilant watcher exclaimed in soft accents, "Oh you fire of love, what an idolatrous salamander!")

The familiar ending is again done rapidly: Leander's corpse is washed up and Hero leaps to her death. Their epitaph in the last two quatrains refers to the two unlucky lovers (*Dos amantes desgraciados*, 96) lying newly-dead on the shore who are joined in death in the way that they could not manage in life, and with this is a final injunction (also adapted from Góngora) to refrain from weeping, crying and complaining (*lutos, llantos, gemir*, 97) and to make

15 The 1784 edition, *El Fabulero por D. Francisco Nieto Molina* (Madrid: Muñoz de Valle, 1764), pp. 85–97 (online) is here cited by page. It is the seventh tale. There are modern editions of the text: *El Fabulero de Francisco Nieto Molina. Estudio y edición*, ed. Rafael Bonilla Cerezo (Criticón 119, 2013): <https://criticon.revues.org/648>; María Josefa Moreno Prieto, *Fabulas y epigramas de Francisco Nieto Molina* (Cordoba: University of Cordoba, 2015). Cerezo discusses textual issues in his introduction, and his text has explanatory notes. The manuscript is also available online in the Biblioteca Digital Hispánica.

sure they are buried. The technique is of telling the story with additions and a vocabulary that at least modifies the serious nature of the content.

9 Paul Scarron, *Leandre et Hero. Ode Burlesque* (1656)

French has a tradition of burlesques on Ovid, and there is a major relevant example by Paul Scarron (1610–1660), who was known for his *Virgile Travesti*, a parody of the *Aeneid* that was imitated elsewhere. He dedicated his burlesque of the story of Hero and Leander, which is one of the delights of the whole tradition, to Nicolas Fou(c)quet, the financial secretary to Louis XIV and well-known patron of the arts (at least until his arrest). It tells the story in 137 ABBA quatrains,¹⁶ summing it up after an introductory passage to the dedicatee, as the tale of two lovers who marry formally one night,

Mais faute d'un méchant batteau,
Faute d'une vieille lanterne,
Le fier Destin qui tout gouverne,
Fist perdre en Mer le Juvenceau. (12)

(But because of an unfortunate boat, because of an old lantern, proud Fate, who governs all things, caused the young man to be lost in the sea.)

The gentle comedy is sustained throughout. Scarron plays with the audience, and he makes genuinely parodic comments on the nature of the basic narrative by again supplying 'missing' and often splendidly inconsequential details in comic fashion, giving us a background for both Hero's and Leander's parents, for example. Hero's father, we are told, inherited well from two of his aunts, and her mother is *passablement belle*, tolerably good-looking. Like Góngora he sometimes he tells us that (in any case unnecessary) details are *not* going to be

16 [Paul] Scarron, *Leandre et Hero. Ode Burlesque dédiée a Monseigneur Foucquet* (Paris: Somnaville, 1556), online and cited here by page-numbers, with i/j and u/v modernised, but with accents — or lack of them — and capitalisation as in the original. On the popularity and success of Scarron see John Lough, *An Introduction to Seventeenth Century France* (London: Longmans, 1954), pp. 176, 188. There is an analysis of it by Bárbara Fernández Taviel de Andrade, "Scarron. La Parodia de Hero y Leandro", in: *Intertexto y Polifonía. Estudios en Homenje a Ma. Aurora Aragón*, ed. F. M. Bando de la Campa et al. (Oviedo: Universidad de Oviedo, 2008), 1, 245–56. Comparable and appreciably earlier, though not about Hero and Leander, is *L'Ovide en belle humeur de Mr Dassoucy* (Paris: Sercy, 1650), by Charles d'Assoucy (1605–77), which is mostly on the *Metamorphoses*.

supplied; of Hero's tower, for example: "on ne sait pas/ Si la tour fut ronde ou carrée" (we don't know if it was round or square, 18). Asides to the audience, generalisations, dead-pan explanations of the obvious, comic word-choices and images, and sudden changes of tone all enliven the proceedings. Scarron inserts, too, little jokes at the expense of Musaios, Ovid and Martial. Musaios is *un Gregeois rimailleur* (17, a Greek rhymester) from whom he claims to have taken the story, and in the initial declaration-scene Hero gives a "discours/ Que j'ay recuilly de Musée" (38, a speech which I have lifted from Musaios). When separated by the winter, Hero describes her boredom in a letter "dont depuis/ Ovid en fit une si belle" (54, of which Ovid has since provided a fine example). Even Martial makes an uncredited guest appearance at the end, when Leander pleads with the waters to spare him on his way to Hero and do their worst on his return — "Ainsi disoit-il quelquefois" (58, and he said that several times). So, of course, did Martial.

Much of the comedy is in the extraneous details. Hero's parents have been mentioned, but Leander's mother is a Cassandra figure, who predicts of Leander "Qu'il mourroit vn jour de trop boire", (14, that he would one day die of drinking too much); she herself dies of *despit*, vexation, when he fails to believe her (14). Hero herself is a "sacrificatrice/ Ou Prestresse; car c'est tout vn" (18, a sacrificer or priestess, it's all the same), who lives in her quite specifically undefined tower with an old servant woman of sixty, *une vieille Sexagenaire* (19), a tower which might be a hundred paces from the temple, or then again might not be: "Il ne m'est pas plus important/ De sçavoir au vray" (20, but I really don't think that it's important to know that).

Much is made of how Leander gets to Sestos to the great festival, and we are shown Hero's earrings and modish hairstyle. The entirely beautiful Hero is seen by Leander, whose heart cries out to her in rhyme, "haro!" 'help!' (21), after which he pursues her "comme un loup apres la brebis" (like a wolf after a lamb, 27). He pretends to read his breviary, but "Disoit tout bas en Grec vulgaire/Belle! je mours d'amour pour vous" (28, he said under his breath in demotic Greek/ My beauty! I'm dying of love for you). The *Grec vulgaire* is a nice reminder of where we are. Now, however, things do not go entirely to plan in the ceremony. In a scene which goes further than Góngora, Hero's mother is praying devoutly, but her father is not:

Son pere de mauvais exemple
Sur un banc ronfloit rudement.

Deux fois son espouse discrete
Pour le reveiller le picqua,

Et deux fois il se rembarqua
A ronfler d'un son de trompette. (29)

(Her father, setting a bad example, was snoring rudely on a bench. Twice his wife poked him discreetly to wake him up; and twice he set off again snoring like a trumpet).

Góngora called him an idler; here an angry sacristan wakes him up and clears the temple, although Leander hides (a motivation for leaving the pair alone used seriously by Mangelsdorf, for example), and comes to speak to Hero “Quand hommes, femmes, chiens et chats/ Bref, quand tout fut hors de l'Eglise” (30, when men, women, dogs and cats, in fact, when everyone was outside the church [or ‘without benefit of clergy’]). He delivers a very long wooing-speech, invoking Venus, and with hundreds (*centaines*, 37) of sighs and sobs. Hero replies and they agree to a marriage, while recognising that the sea is an *obstacle terrible* (42). The sea, we are reminded, is never without strong winds, but although Leander is also without a boat; he can swim like a fish. Hero arranges to set out a torch to guide him, and Leander prosaically tells her to put it into a lantern-case, because otherwise it would go out. Scarron tells us that he will not prolong the story, a nice play with another topos, by describing Hero's long wait. Ovid's Leander strips naked and embraces the sea. Here “Dans l'humide séjour des Thons/ Il lança son corps sans chemise” (46, Into the damp environment of the fish he hurled his body, without a shirt).

The pair celebrate their wedding, and Scarron leaves it to his readers to judge when they separated (49). Leander needs sleep, but he is a hardy soul, and so he “exposes himself to the fish” fourteen or fifteen times (51). What modern lover would keep that up all summer long, asks Scarron, but then winter comes. They are separated for longer periods, and Hero writes her apparently sub-Ovidian letter. An impatient Leander sets out into the Hellespont again, quoting Martial, while Hero sets up the candle to guide him, regretting that she does not in fact have a lantern. She uses her chemise to shield it, but this is lifted by the wind: “Main un vent, peut-estre de Bise/Ou quelque autre rude souffleur ...” (59, But a wind, maybe a north-wind, or maybe some other nasty puffer) blows out the candle. Hero prays to Venus to get it to light again, but sadly, since Hero is no longer a virgin (*pucelle*, 60) she no longer has the qualifications for her prayers to work. Leander, meanwhile, in accordance with his late mother's prophecy, and almost echoing Musaios, falls victim “D'une eau qui n'est pas bonne à boire” until “Bref il mourut” (63, water that is not very good to drink ... in short, he died). He has, however, achieved romantic fame, and the end is also nicely abrupt: when Hero sees that her lover is

mort sans remede (63, irredeemably dead) she throws herself onto his body and dies.

The style of Scarron's humour is very different from the vulgarities and slapstick that will be seen in some of the English Ovid-travesties, but it is echoed by the later German balladeers Hölty and Weisser. Scarron, whose version is still expansive (though shorter than that, for example, by Wycherley) manages to sustain the humour throughout, and play consistently with an audience which knew the tale and probably something of the classical background. It is noteworthy that Scarron's text has been presented on stage in Paris, with a *mise-en-scène* by the producer and director Charles Di Meglio (b. 1986).

10 J[ames] S[mith], *The Loves of Hero and Leander, a Mock Poem*
(1651, 1653)

A year or so earlier than Scarron's burlesque, but very different, is the travesty by James Smith (1605–1667). Although he was a clergyman, a precentor of Exeter Cathedral, his authorship is assumed for some incongruously salacious poetry, including a version of Hero and Leander in more than seven hundred less than subtle lines. Later seventeenth-century English burlesques are more inclined to the scatological, but this adds a sexual dimension, with knockabout interludes. As Roy Booth points out, it is “designed to be offensive”.¹⁷

The whole tone is unheroically crude and need not be examined in too great a detail. Its interest lies in the way it changes the familiar story, while focusing on the sexual aspects. It seems, perhaps predictably, to know Marlowe's version best. Leander, out walking, gets a stone in his shoe and is sitting by the river when Hero and her maid come by. His initial song (which anticipates even meeting Hero) should be enough to give the flavour of the whole:

O would I had my love in bed,
Though she were nere so fell;
I'd fight her with my Adders head
Untill I made her swell.
O Hero, Hero pity me,
With a Dildo, Dildo, Dildo dee. (p. 3)

17 *The Loves of Hero and Leander, a mock Poem with Marginall Notes and other choice Pieces of Drollery* (London: n.p., 1653). The first edition, with the spelling 'peices' is dated 1651. The prefatory verses are signed J. S., which is assumed to be James Smith. The 1653 edition is online and cited by page. See on the text Booth, “Hero's Afterlife”, p. 11.

Having watched him as he goes first to urinate, then to engage in other genital activities, Hero falls in love with him on sight of “his blind-worm”. There is a long and specific erotic scene involving nautical imagery, then Leander is invited to her tower at night, when she will set a taper to guide him. Meanwhile her maid has been observing all this from a tree, but falls out of it, and is herself used by a passing weaver. Hero whistles for her maid and they return to the tower and to her father. As Hero waits for the night, we are given a prurient description of her ablutions. Leander sets out, naked, following the light, and “with his hand on Cod”, swims on his back so that Hero can observe what he has to offer.

In an echo of Marlowe, Neptune tries to get hold of the “buxsome boy” and offers him a great deal of fish of different sorts if Leander will come and join him. Rejected, Neptune casts Leander crossly onto the sand by Hero’s tower, where he is found by some watchmen, who want to take him to the “Cunt-/Stable” (p. 18, wordplays like this are frequent, and hardly uncommon in popular verse at the time).¹⁸ There is a protracted and comic (not to say ludicrous and vulgar) fight, but Leander, after striking off the nose of one of the watchmen (which lodges in his bottom, his *nock*), manages to reach Hero. There is another extended erotic encounter, during which Leander recounts the tale of King Cophetua and the Beggar-Maid, in imitation of the insertion of other tales into the narrative in more serious versions. The ending is again full of (this time less erotic) action, as Hero’s father is awakened and charges at Leander with a sword as he is escaping. Although almost doing himself harm when caught by the window-latch, Leander falls out into the waves, where Neptune, still angry, turns him into a crab, doomed to walk sideways for ever. The noseless watchman is metamorphosed into an owl and Hero’s father loses his wits and dies. Serious seventeenth-century versions permit Hero a long farewell complaint before a tragic drowning; here things are much more briefly and considerably more coarsely done, although not without a classical allusion, this time to Niobe:

Fair Hero, like the wench that cry’d
Till she was turned into a stone,
For her Leander made her moan,
But when she heard, poor silly drab,
That he was turned into a crab
Then she fell down flat as a Flounder,
Her floodgates ope’t, and her own water drowned her. (p. 36f.)

18 The collection *Pills to Purge Melancholy* regularly has plays on the word ‘coney’ (pronounced ‘cunny’), for example.

The whole thing is a bawdy, vulgar and silly romp based loosely upon, but for all that still recognisably the tale of Hero and Leander. There are references to Sestos and Abydos, and Hero lives in a tower; but there are slapstick extras such as the watchmen and Hero's proactive father. Ovid's old nurse has become an over-sexed and voyeuristic maid, who has, however, no further part in the tale after her arboreal misadventure. The guiding light, though mentioned, does not go out, and in any case parts, at least, of Leander are presumed visible as he swims across. For all that, this version does demand knowledge of the original tale, and Marlowe is imitated both in the Neptune section and perhaps in the use of an inserted narrative. The tragic tale from antiquity has become a crude erotic farce, and the metamorphosis mocks the serious endings in Chapman and elsewhere. There is even a concluding epitaph, which must serve as a final comment on the level of seriousness of the whole:

They were both drowned, whilst Love and Fate contended;
And thus they, both pure flesh, like pure fish ended. (p. 37)

11 William Wycherley, *Hero and Leander in Burlesque* (1669)

Probably the longest of the burlesques is that by William Wycherley (1640/1–1716), more than a thousand lines in rhymed couplets.¹⁹ It plays with details of the story, with the reader, and with the concept of tragedy, so that the reader is at the end instructed *not* to take the story to heart. The relationship of the work to Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis* has been noted, and indeed, that tale is told within this one in an adapted version.

We are in Abydos and Sestos again, rather than on the Thames, but the location is not very important, although we are occasionally reminded that the people involved are Greeks. Leander is not a great noble's son, but an apprentice barber (in modern terms he might be a slightly foppish coiffeur), who dresses well and does not indulge especially in the physical activities referred to by Ovid's Hero, although he can swim, this time "like any Duck" (7), since his father is a boatman. Hero ("A bonny buxom bouncing Sestian

19 William Wycherley, *Hero and Leander in Burlesque* (London: n. pub., 1669), cited by page; and online in the Early English Books Online Text Creation Partnership, provided by the University of Michigan. It was registered in 1668. There is a good analysis of it by Booth, "Hero's Afterlife", pp. 16–24. He discusses the relationship with Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis* and also with Marlowe, and refers to "bawdy reduction" and "teasing ironies", two terms which do illuminate Wycherley's skill.

lass", 8) who is by far the more dominant in the relationship, lives and works in a hostelry at the sign of the Tower (as in Quevedo) in Sestos, which here is owned by her mother. Hero's parents figure regularly in burlesques, and this time the mother, "a large hearted woman/ Whose house to merry Greeks was always common" (8) is (allegedly) a widow, though no one is entirely sure about Hero's father, a point Wycherley uses for a sideswipe at the profusion of sea-gods in other texts when he reports speculation that her father had been "some Sea-God disguised in fishing boots" (8). That Hero is a priestess in Musaios's poem is acknowledged — "In old Greek writ it manifest is/ Hero had Orders, and was Venus Priestess" (8) — but here this is a euphemism for her activities in providing partners.

Sestos has its customary festival, and (building on Marlowe) the temple walls are pornographic, with pictures of the "smutty doings" of the Gods. The main place is taken by Venus, "the Queen of Sluts .../With dainty fine Hober-de-hoy Adonis" (27). Hero is about to make an oration, however, when the narrator pauses: "But hold a stroak, you nimble Slut; for sure/ We skip the Chappels choicest Furniture" (40). This is a Priapus, much admired by the women.

Leander has observed Hero and makes efforts to get her alone. However, lacking the rhetorical skills he sometimes has, this Leander stammers and is dumb, gazing down at his feet:

For sure Leander knew no Politicks,
No Lime-twigg words, or subtle sly Dog-tricks
To chase, to circumvent her, or to catch'er;
Or where she itch'd did know, or where to scratch her. (57)

Hero looks at him rather closely, then addresses him in very critical terms, which goads him into a cross answer, which was patently her aim. They break a cracked groat as a token, and she arranges that he should turn up at The Tower at midnight secretly, to preserve her reputation, itself an interesting concept in the context. A nurse will let him in. Leander accordingly wanders off into the woods and fields, waiting impatiently; indeed, he quite literally has ants in his pants from sitting on the ground, where emmets make *him* itch (61). At the appointed time he is admitted by the nurse and runs up to Hero's garret (she is "well-drest/ For exercise", 64). Having drunk, however, Leander fall asleep, and as Booth notes, Wycherley plays with the reader's expectations and says that the reader, too, will have to wait. Things do work out eventually, of course, although when Leander leaves at dawn, rather precipitously, he puts on her stockings instead of his own, and so even the familiar *aubade* turns into farce.

Their relationship continues until “Dame Fortune, first or last, doth prove a Slut” (71). After an impatient (Ovidian) five or six nights when Leander has been unable to cross, he sets off “like a drunken Heroe” (72). He drowns, either because the lamp goes out or because he gets a cramp, and Hero, awakened perhaps by the smell of the extinguished lamp, sees his corpse: “She perceiv’d her dear Duck dead as herring” (75). Her own death does not come about in quite the same way as in the more serious versions. Here she leans out of her garret window slightly too far:

That Tiptoes slipt, and ere she was awar
(Some do dispute it though) she tipt clean over
Into the Brine upon her pickled Lover. (75)

Those that “dispute” this version are of course those following the original story, so that accidental death is presented here as the definitive version, rather than suicide. The reader is enjoined not to take this sad ending to heart, because, just as serious versions regularly take the sting out of the ending by pointing to their union in the afterlife, we learn in the final couplet (with a suitably terrible rhyme): “... they but div’d directly to Elizium/ Where such Folkes pass their time as you cou’d wish ‘um”. (75)

As a travesty of the tale of Hero and Leander, Wycherley’s comedy is effective; the story as such is burlesqued in various ways, with the Venus and Adonis insertion, with the farce of the first night, and with the much-reduced tragic ending, with Leander a pickled herring. The gods are all over-sexed; Fortune is a slut and will have her way eventually; Leander maybe dies of cramp, possibly because of a cross-string tied too tightly; Hero falls out of the window (in spite of all those other versions). But none of that matters, because they are as perfectly happy in Elysium as the reader could wish ‘um.

**12 Three English Ovid-Travesties: *Ovidius Exulans* or *Ovid Travestie*;
 The Wits Paraphras’d; Alexander Radcliffe, *Ovid Travestie* (1673–81)**

The later seventeenth century saw several comic *Heroides*, two of uncertain — and occasionally confused — authorship, the third by Captain Alexander Radcliffe, of whom not much is known in any case. The approaches in these three texts vary from scatological to erotic coarsening, and include another contemporary relocation of the tale to the Thames.

The first relevant text, *Ovidius Exulans* or *Ovid Travestie*, appeared in 1673 and is sometimes also ascribed to Alexander Radcliffe, or seen as the first edition

of his own similarly titled work, although it is actually quite separate.²⁰ It is attributed on the title page to 'Naso Scarronnomimus', which as Susan Wiseman points out, places it in the context of the *Scarronides*, Charles Cotton's burlesque on Vergil, imitating the burlesques of Paul Scarron himself.²¹ There is a preface (signed N. S.) and several dedicatory poems praising the work, also signed mostly by initials. The key again is language and register, with the elevated style of Ovid replaced by ordinary and indeed coarse demotic.

Leander's letter to Hero is too long for the joke to be very effective. In the re-set narrative Leander is unable to swim "the Thames so plaguey rough". He seems to have been a sailor who fought the Dutch, but why he neither sails nor indeed crosses any of the bridges even then available is unclear. He is coarse, rather than defiant about Boreas, who is "p[ox]'t", and his declaration of love is not very Ovidian: "Pish? hang my neck I car'nt a f[art]/For ought but thee mine own sweet heart". The vulgarities are usually abbreviated, but obvious. The topos of avoiding details of their night of love uses, however, a classical formula (*tot — quot*):

Tis full as easie to count o're
Every Pebble on the shore
As tell the unspeakable delight
We two together had that night.

His declaration, on the other hand, recasts Ovid in deliberately vulgar language: "I'de row with hands, sans further pudder/ And stick a pole in A[rse]

20 *Ovidius Exulans or Ovid Travestie. A Mock-Poem on Five Epistles of Ovid ... in English Burlesque* (London: Samuel Speed, 1673), 'Ovid being driven out'. Leander to Hero is the second of the five epistles included, pp. 19–43, and Hero's reply is the fourth, pp. 65–76. It is online. Andreadis, "Early Modern Afterlife of Ovidian Erotics", thinks p. 411 that this text is the first edition of Alexander Radcliffe's work, misled presumably by a similar assumption in the necessarily sparse entry on Radcliffe in the 1900 *Dictionary of National Biography*. Radcliffe's own second edition did apparently increase the number of epistles by ten, but a glance at the text of the 1673 work makes clear not only that the epistles are very different, but that the opening epistle in 1673 (Dido) is not even in the Radcliffe collection. Susan Wiseman's "Perfectly Ovidian?", has them separate, p. 425; she discusses all three in detail, although she (slightly) misnames this work. See also Richard F. Hardin, "Ovid in Seventeenth Century England", *Comparative Literature* 24 (1972), 44–6, esp. p. 52f., and rather earlier Albert H. West, *L'Influence française dans la poésie burlesque en Angleterre entre 1660 et 1700* ([Paris, 1931] repr. Geneva: Slatkine, 1980), pp. 85–93.

21 'Naso the Scarron-imitator'. Scarron's parody of the *Aeneid* has the Gods speaking colloquial language, and this was imitated by Charles Cotton (1630–87) in his *Scarronides, or Virgile Travestie* of 1664. Naso was of course Ovid's cognomen. Whether Scarron's *Leandre et Hero* was known is unclear.

for Rudder.” Hero’s letter is considerably shorter, and actually rather closer to Ovid. She complains of all the things that men can occupy themselves with, and urges him to cross, admittedly rather more bluntly: “Make hast you Rogue”, but is then worried that he might drown, given that the thunder is such that you might think “curst Papists” were blowing up the city in a gunpowder plot. She also urges him, with an echo of Rosalind, “prithee have a care of Cramp”.

The Wits Paraphras’d appeared in 1680, with the preface signed by the initials M. T.²² The subtitle, referring to *Paraphrase upon Paraphrase in a Burlesque on the Several Late Translations of Ovid’s Epistles*, seems to indicate that it is aimed (as is Radcliffe’s) at Dryden’s collection, for which Nahum Tate provided the Leander and Hero letters, hence these are, as the subtitle implies, versions of versions, rather than of the originals. Although ostensibly based on Ovid, Hero is still a priestess.

The tone of Leander’s letter is, not unlike the earlier travesty, scatological, again with the rhyme-words not actually printed. Leander says of his letter:

Then I betook me to my Writing
 ‘Twill serve you when you go a sh—ing,
 Blest Paper! to what happy pass
 Art thou ordain’d, to kiss her A—.

The idea of the letter used for that purpose recurs at the end as a crude mockery of Ovid’s narrative device. Much of the letter, however, is not too far from Ovid in any case, albeit with the sexual elements exaggerated a little (“so mad were you for to be at it”, “gratifie my lewder sences”). The central erotic scene as remembered by Leander could almost be a translation: “What then we did, our selves know best/ Nor ought the deed to be exprest”, and Leander wonders too that if he is prevented from swimming in the summer, what will winter be like? If he dies, however, his thought is that Hero “can’t with stroaking hand restore/ The part you oft revived before”, and as indicated, he urges the letter to be used later as bumf. Reducing epistolary Ovid to that indignity sounds like the revenge of an English schoolboy for all those Latin lessons.

If Leander’s letter is scatological with some sexual elements, Hero’s response plays up the latter, and is, by and large, slightly closer to Ovid and a more effective travesty:

22 *The Wits Paraphras’d or, Paraphrase upon Paraphrase in a Burlesque on the Several Late Translations of Ovid’s Epistles* (London: Cademan, 1680), pp. 35–41 and 42–8 for the two letters (online). It has been ascribed to Mat(t)hew Stevenson (d. 1684), for example by Booth, who discusses it with the other texts in his “Hero’s Afterlife”, p. 12, though the ascription seems unclear.

With laughing when I read your Prose
 I was ready to bepiss my hose:
 And nothing else, except your stick
 Cou'd so much tickle me to th'Quick.

Ovid is still (just) within sight, although Hero's complaint at what men can do where women are constrained is neatly caricatured: "You can divert your self with roaring,/ About your bus'ness, drinking, whoring", Her reiterated questions to the old nurse are also nicely mocked: "While sleepy as a Dog, and nodding,/ The drowsie wretch replies, A Pudding". Every noise startles her, specifically even if the nurse breaks wind. Hero's dream is more graphically erotic, however, and her declaration about it is crossly put: "But pox upon't, 'twas but a dream". Her summary statement, however, is vigorously at odds with the torment she feels in many versions between her love and any externally imposed strictures:

My Thing's my own, while no one sees,
 Sure I may use it as I please.
 A Pox of Fame and Reputation,
 Why shou'd it spoil our Recreation.

She even offers to meet Leander "chin-deep i'th' Hellespont". Her ominous dream of the dolphin is transformed into one of a "monstrous sturgeon", however, and she urges him not to come, confident that the storm will not last in any case. The contrast between the two letters is itself of interest: Leander's is simply a travesty, a largely scatological joke, while Hero's, if still fairly coarse, exaggerates the erotic aspect of the story as a whole, an element which actually *is* part of Ovid's narrative. There is not much of a hint of the tragedy, however.

The third relevant burlesque on the *Heroides* is that by Captain Alexander Radcliffe, originally of Grays Inn, but who seems to have given up the law for soldiering. The *Poetical Register* of 1773 sums him up engagingly, if not very informatively, as: "An Officer of the Army, devoted to *Parnassus*. He was a Man of strong propensity to Mirth and Pleasure, as generally most of our Military Gentlemen are, he wrote merrily in all his performances".²³ His *Ovid Travestie, a Burlesque upon Ovids Epistles* appeared in various editions, first by Tonson in

23 *Poetical Register*, II, 170f. No further details are given, and the Ovid travesty is not mentioned, though his pieces are all said to "have a great deal of low Humour".

1680, then again the following year in an edition “enlarged with Ten Epistles”, and reprinted several times. This work, too, mocks the Dryden collection.²⁴

Radcliffe gives a modernised context for his characters. Leander is a school-master and poet in Richmond, enamoured of a governess on the other side of the Thames at Twickenham (Twitnam), to whom he regularly swims, guided by her “watch-light in the supremest chamber”. The Thames, however, is so rough that he has to send a letter by way of a waterman. There is a hint that the clandestine behaviour is because his family “begins to smook [suspect] the matter”, but the text is quite close to Ovid, apart from the replacement of the Hellespont. His “Mistress is a Goddess upon Earth”, and the one comic element is that the watermen mock Leander when he swims, calling him a “Porpus” — a defusing of the ominous dolphin.

Hero's response is also close to Ovid. She notes that Leander can do things that she cannot, but where the earlier version talked of “whoring”, here the reference is simply to bowling on a green or having a drink in a tavern. She worries — and then rejects the idea — that she might have as a rival “a Richmond wench”, and even her prophetic dream of disaster is defused by incongruity, as it becomes one of a water-spaniel trapped in the weeds and drowned while out after duck; dolphins are, it is true, rare in the Thames. The comedy here is principally in the re-location of the story into a mundane environment and the transformation of the protagonists into modern, but ordinary people, with the amused watermen as an extra.

13 The German Ballad-Travesties

The increasing interest in the ballad in Germany from the later part of the eighteenth-century led not only to collections like *Des Knaben Wunderhorn*, but to the literary ballads of major writers like Schiller, so that it is hardly surprising that comic ballads also appeared, several on Hero and Leander. The collections included the *Königskinder* ballads, of which there were direct parodies, or more accurately travesties with no water and a happy end, and with the royal

24 Alexander Radcliffe, *Ovid Travestie, a Burlesque upon Ovids Epistles ... Enlarged with Ten Epistles never before Printed* (London: Tonson, 2nd ed., 1681). This second enlarged edition — the first edition, 1680, had the title “Burlesque upon several of Ovids Epistles” — increased the number of letters to fifteen. There were several later editions (sometimes with his other works), and the *Ovid Travestie* even appeared in a private reprint in 1889. Many versions are online, including the 1681 edition, cited here. Leander to Hero is on pp. 45–53. Hero's reply pp. 54–9. See Wiseman, “Perfectly Ovidian”, p. 424f.

children replaced by *Nachbarskinder*, neighbours' children.²⁵ German ballad-travesties of the tale as such are distinguished not by coarseness or indeed eroticism, but because they are for the most part gently and genuinely funny, the humour deriving from linguistic games and from the device, used to such effect in the nineteenth century by Heine in particular, of the *Stimmungsbruch*, an abrupt and comical switch in mood or register.

14 Ludwig Christoph Heinrich Hölty, 'Leander und Hero' (ca 1770?)

Ludwig Hölty (1748–76) was one of the major figures of the so-called *Göttinger Hainbund*, the 'grove of poets' from Göttingen interested in and influenced by the ballad, and beside his serious ballads may be set his 'Leander und Hero', a little work published from material he left behind after his early death from consumption.²⁶ Ten eight-line stanzas (each really two quatrains) provide interesting answers to some of the open questions — why does he have to swim? why do the gods reject him? — and it opens with what can only be termed a name-check for Musaios (presumably, however, the mythical singer once more, rather than the Grammarian):

Schon ehemals sang der Leyermann
Musaeus die Geschichte
Die ich euch jetzt, so gut ich kann,
Erzähle und berichte.

(Many, many years ago, Musaeus the lyre-strummer sang the tale of which
I am about, to the best of my ability, to give you an account and report).

Leander falls in love with Hero (described as *die Miss*), and she loves him. "Doch, ach, das Meer der Helle trennt/ Die liebestrunkenen Kinder" (But alas, Helle's sea separates the love-drunk children). Leander will swim across to her and she will hold out *ein Lichtlein*, a little light. The reason for the swimming is the by now familiar simple one, however: "Er hatte, leider, keinen Kahn/ Drum

25 See Eckhard John's detailed discussion in his entry "Es waren zwei Nachbarskinder" (2013), in the online *Liederlexikon* at: liederlexikon.de/lieder/es_waren_zwei_nachbarskinder. The version by Julius Wolff in the nineteenth century was set to music by several composers. It was re-done in Cologne dialect ('Et wore zwei Nohberschkinder') by Christian Witt (1868–1955). These provide the story with a happy end, although the two would-be lovers stay apart in a political version from after the First World War, when there was no more royalty in Germany and hence no royal children.

26 It may be found in the review of Jellinek's *Sage* by Hoenig, p. 37f.

schwamm er durch die Fluthen" (unfortunately he didn't have a boat, so he swam through the floods). The story is then summed up in a comic version of Petrarch's summary:

Leander schwamm, die Schöne saß
 Am Ufer, voll Verlangen
 Den Liebling, wär er doch so nass
 Zu küssen, zu umfassen.

(Leander swam, the lovely one sat on the shore, full of desire to kiss and to embrace her darling, no matter how wet he might be).

A storm blows the light out of Hero's hand, but although she prays vigorously to the gods, her prayers are not answered, this time because the gods are in fact having dinner, and Aphrodite/Venus is reluctant to leave hers. Venus is here referred to *Madam Vulkaninn*, a less than usual designation even for a goddess with a large range of different titles, referring to her unfortunate marriage to Hephaistos/Vulcan:

Madam Vulkaninn speiste just,
 Am Tisch, wo Götter saßen,
 Und zeigte eben keine Lust
 den Braten zu verlassen.

(Mrs Vulcan was just having dinner at the table where the gods were sitting, and showed no inclination at all to leave the roast).

The ending is casually direct. As Hero weeps, "Indessen wallt/ Ein Leichnam ihr entgegen./ Leander ists". (Meanwhile a corpse is bobbing along towards her. It is Leander). She hurls herself into the sea, "Und ihre Seele flattert fort/ Dem schönen Leib entzogen" (and her soul flutters away, taken out of her beautiful body). The humour lies, of course, in the contrast between the direct and banal presentation and the nature of the (familiar) tragic events described. Leander swims because he doesn't have a boat, and the gods are too busy eating a roast dinner to answer desperate prayers.

15 Daniel Schiebeler, 'Leander und Hero' (1773)

Daniel Schiebeler (1741–1771) is unusual in that he inserts the familiar narrative into a context, so that the humour lies in the use of the tale, rather than in the

tale itself.²⁷ His twenty-one quatrains are addressed in good pastoral fashion to Chloe, who has asked for a song, and is offered the tale of a young man who once loved a girl who was just as beautiful as Chloe, and who loved her just as strongly as the speaker loves Chloe. The difference is that his love was reciprocated, whereas the speaker's is not. Leander sees Hero and they fall in love:

Allein der strenge Vater
Errieth, zu beyder Pein
Den Trieb, den sie entflammte
Und schloß das Mädchen ein.

(But her strict father spotted, to their mutual distress, the urge that inflamed them, and locked the girl up).

There is no lamp, Leander swims regularly by moonlight, and tritons and nymphs are impressed with his prowess. Then a storm prevents him from doing so for a week, until he dives in, *voll Verlangen*, full of desire, but drowns; his corpse is washed up and Hero dies of love for him. The whole thing is told very rapidly indeed, but the story itself is not the point, because the narrator now returns to Chloe and asks if she has been duly moved by this tragic tale? "Du fühlst des Mitleids Züge;/ Nur, Chloe, nicht für mich!" (You feel the tug of sympathy/ Chloe, only not for me). But, says the final quatrain, she should refrain from her callous and obdurate behaviour (*Sprödigkeit*), because someone really seeking death could find it even in the quietest of streams. The coincidental foreshadowing of W. S. Gilbert's 'Tit-Willow' is hard to shake off. A personalisation of the narrative in a mock-pastoral makes for an unusual burlesque.

16 Christoph Friedrich Weisser, 'Leander und Hero' (1804)

Another German poet, Christoph Friedrich Weisser (1761–1834) included in his collection of "Eight Romances" in 1804 a comical retelling of the tale in nineteen ballad-quatrains. The contrast between the familiar content and the once more deliberately incongruous language makes for a genuinely funny travesty.²⁸ A flavour can be given by the introduction to the main figure, Leander:

²⁷ Daniel Schiebeler, *Auserlesene Gedichte* (Hamburg: Bode, 1773), pp. 229–32.

²⁸ Christoph Friedrich Weisser, *Acht Romanzen* (Leipzig: Dyk, 1804), pp. 47–54 (no. 4), cited by quatrain. It is impossible to resist imitating the verse in translation. The poem is also reprinted in *Deutsche Humor neuer Zeit*, ed. Heinrich Merckens and Richard Weitbrecht

Er pflegte (hoch zu preisen
Ist solch ein Muth fürwahr!)
Zu Wasser oft zu reisen,
Denkt, ohne Schiff sogar. (2)

He used (and this is very brave)
To take a watery trip,
And venture out upon the wave,
But wait! — without a ship!

His impetus, we are then told, was not mercantilism or indeed whaling but a tower-dwelling lady who is even more beautiful than Venus. *Walfischfang*, whaling, provides a splendidly absurd rhyme for *sprang*, jumped, but we are also told that this is why there are no songs about him in the Hanseatic towns. In an aside, the speaker notes that one would not, of course, take such risks for an everyday sort of face (*Alltagsgesicht*, 8). The lady — who is named only casually, later on, a nod to the fact that the reader knows the story that is being burlesqued — lovingly holds up a torch to show “dem theuren Schwimmer,/ Wohin er schwimmen soll” (10, to the beloved swimmer/ Where he’s supposed to swim”). The sea is not an element in which one should spend much time, however:

Und ach! nach langem Streiten
Stirbt er, der frömmste Held,
Wie einst zu Noah’s Zeiten
Die ganze Sünder-Welt. (13)

And woe! after much swimming
He died, though pure and good,
Like all sinful men and women
At the time of Noah’s flood.

Leander goes off politely in Charon’s boat. Meanwhile, Hero is distraught, having read the situation skilfully (*gar meisterlich*, 16). Weisser now allows himself another nicely incongruous but quite genuine classical allusion: Hero curses the sea, and then praises Xerxes who, according to Herodotos,

(Würzburg: Stuber, 1881), pp. 450–2. It anticipates — especially in the deflationary *Stimmungsbruch* ending — the tone of Heine’s regularly misunderstood ‘Lorelei’. One wonders whether Heine knew this work.

gave the Hellespont an angry thrashing for breaking down his bridge. The last two strophes (18–9) play with the idea of treating this tragedy from antiquity with respect by ostensibly refusing to give the final details, while doing so in any case. The convoluted grammar, running over the two quatrains, is part of the joke:

Daß, wie in einem Liede
Ein alter Dichter sang,
Sie, ihres Lebens müde
Gar in die Fluten sprang,

Wag ich nicht zu berichten,
Damit nicht alle Welt
Die wahrste der Geschichten
Für eine Fabel hält.

The fact that (as once in a song
An ancient singer told)
She, finding now her life too long,
Leapt in the waters cold,

Is something I daren't tell you,
For fear that one and all
Will think that this story so true
Is just a tale tall.

The work derives much of its effect from its brevity and use of the simple ballad-metre, with mock-innocent language, incongruous asides, and learned classical or biblical additions.

17 Jean-François de la Harpe, *Hero et Leandre. Romance* (1778)

The ballad version of the tale by Jean-François de La Harpe (1739–1803) consists of nine eight-line strophes (ABABCD CD) and an *envoi* addressed to an unnamed lady.²⁹ De la Harpe published as a young man a series of *Heroides*-imitations

29 *Oeuvres de M. de la Harpe. Tome second. Poésies* (Paris: Pissot, 1778), pp. 176–9 (cited). The *envoi* is to “Madame D****” in the posthumous collection: *Oeuvres choisies et posthumes de Jean-François de la Harpe*, Vol. III (Paris: Migneret, 1806), pp. 126–8. Both editions online.

with an essay on the form, but his gentle joke at the expense of Hero and Leander is not especially Ovid-influenced, and it ends, in fact, with Martial. The story is set up at the outset as the tragic tale of a young man (born in Sestos on this occasion) who dies in the sea while swimming to Abydos. The switch of localities aside, we are told that his love-affair prospers for a long time (in spite of the unjust constraints of rivals and relatives), as he swims towards Hero's *flambeau*. But it does not last: "Las! il devint trop téméraire/ Pour avoir été trop heureux ..." (Alas, he became too bold, from having been too happy). The poet accepts Leander's fate in the entirely matter-of-fact manner with which the whole story is narrated, and brevity is again part of the humorous effect: "Il n'est point de bonheur durable/ Telle est la loi de l'Univers" (No luck can last — that's the law of the universe). The customary anger of the gods is reduced here to the jealousy of Neptune, sovereign of the sea, whom we see "caressing a nereid", whilst observing Leander's happiness. "Effrayons," dit il, "son audace" (Let's put the wind up his audacity, he says). Leander senses that he is being punished, the flame is extinguished, his corpse is washed to the shore and "Dans l'onde elle [Hero] s'ensélevit" (the verb is again unusual; perhaps 'and Hero rides off into the sunset on the waves'), joining Leander in his watery tomb. It is all presented very rapidly, though with some deliberately overblown words, and the *envoi*, addressed to a lady, sums it all up:

Il ne faut point braver l'orage;
 C'est un parti trop dangereux;
 Il vaut bien mieux sur le rivage,
 Attendre un instant plus heureux.
 Mais si pour vous par imprudence,
 J'affrontais l'humide séjour,
 Je voudrais du moins l'assurance
 De n'être noyé qu'au retour.

(One does not have to brave the storm — that's too dangerous a game; it's better to wait on the shore for a more auspicious time. But if, for your sake I should be imprudent enough to venture forth to brave the dampness, then I should at least like to be assured that I should only be drowned on the way back).

The work was reprinted in collections, not always with the author's name, and with some variations in the text. The poem has the subheading "Sur l'Air de la Romance de Gabrielle de Vergi".

The warning moral in the first quatrain of this *envoi* neatly undermines the seriousness of the story, and especially those versions in which Leander gives way to impatience; he should simply have waited for better weather. The equally comical final lines (which echo Scarron, *humide séjour* ...) culminate, however, with Martial and the sentiment (here couched in very polite terms) used so often in serious texts.

18 Otto Sommerstorff, 'Hero und Leander' (1899/1900)

The Austrian Otto Müller (1859–1934), who used Otto Sommerstorff as a stage-name, was both an actor and a writer of comic verse, and the two activities coincided in the poem on Hero and Leander in his collection *Scherzgedichte* ('comic poems'), which appeared in 1899 and was much reprinted.³⁰ His piece is styled a dramatic poem and opens with a spoof stage-direction listing the cast, which includes the sea, which apparently rises when the curtain does. It is morning and Leander is about to depart. Hero speaks first at some length, telling Leander to stay with her and not to test the gods and swim on such a stormy night; her speech is full of extravagant wordplays which cannot easily be translated (*in meinen Mienen mahnen ... der Wogen Wiegen wagen* ..., perhaps 'my gestures do not jest' and 'dare the dire damp deeps'). Leander's speech is much shorter. Quite right, he agrees, it would indeed be crazy to test the gods in bad weather (*Unwetter*) like this. Instead "wir gehen doch zum Standesamt" — 'we'll go to the Register Office and get married'. The curtain falls on the pair in each other's embrace.

The whole is a slight but neat spoof with a range of thematic targets, including the overblown language of Hero's desperate but florid pleading (Tennyson's poem on this situation is serious); but most of all the target is the audience expectation of a tragic outcome in such a well-known tale. By sabotaging the story and making it ridiculous through Leander's unexpected and matter-of-fact agreement that challenging the gods is indeed extremely silly, it does make the audience think about the nature of the tradition.

30 Otto Sommerstorff, *Scherzgedichte* (Berlin: Hofmann, 6th ed. 1911), pp. 46–8.

19 Heinz Erhardt, 'Die Sage von Hero und Leander oder "Falsche Sparsamkeit"' (Mid-20th Century)

Heinz Erhardt (1909–1979) was, like Sommerstorff, both an actor and a writer of German comic verse, and his 'Saga of Hero and Leander, or "False Economy"' serves well to round off a survey of humorous versions. It turns the whole narrative into a joke which is summarised in the sub-title; but it is at the same time a parody of Ovid, as well as a burlesque of the constants in the story.³¹

The first burlesque feature is the deliberate switching of the names. Hero, the man, is a famous swimmer, whilst his enamorata is called Lea. They live separated by a stretch of water which, the audience is told, you would remember was the Hellespont, had you bothered to stay awake during the lessons on myths at school. The antiquity of the tale is mocked, although the protagonists are not very classical (and we must forgive the use of the word 'myth'). The first swipe at Ovid is in the title of the first of the three short sections, *Die Ansichtskarte*, the picture-postcard. Simply because he is such a good swimmer, our hero, Hero, decides he will work until Saturday, then swim across after work (*nach Dienstschluss*) to visit Lea; accordingly he sends his beloved the titular postcard announcing his intention, and telling her to set up a candle so that he can see his way. The epistolary *Heroides* are thus a little reduced. At the appointed time Hero dives in, wearing only swimming trunks (full Ovidian nakedness might nowadays be improper), and well rubbed with salad-oil (Hero anoints him with rose-scented oil in Musaios, 264f. to remove the smell of salt). Here he also has a rose clasped between his teeth.

The second section — the divisions play upon the structure of the story — is called *Der Untergang* (downfall). The water is cold, but worse, Hero cannot see the candle. He politely asks (presumably the now non-existent gods) if he is going the right way, but no one answers, "Und so verliert im Meer Getöse/er erst die Hoffnung, dann die Rose" (And so in the roaring sea he loses first all hope, and then the rose). His last words are not of course 'Hero', since he *is* Hero, nor even 'Lea', but "Junge, Junge", literally "boy, boy," but in fact a mild phatic exclamation in modern German somewhere on the spectrum between 'well, well, well' and 'oh bugger'. Erhardt will have been familiar with Hölderlin, in whose tragic poem Hero exclaims "Jüngling! Jüngling!", "young man! young man!". He drowns, of course.

31 The text is in several places online, such as: derleuchtturm.blogspot.com/2010/02/nochn-gedicht-in-bad-godesberg.html and on many other websites. The poem as included at: muenic.de/gedichte/Erhardt.html adds a joke at the expense of Grillparzer, and there is a spoken version by Walther Leo Frantzen available via YouTube (as well as others).

Section three is *Die Erläuterung*, the explanation, and this is the punch-line of the whole joke. Why has Lea not lit her candle? Simply because she did not get the postcard until the Monday morning. The point is then driven home in the final *Schlußfolgerung*, conclusion, the equivalent of the moral in early versions, which explains the reference to false economies. Had he sent a telegram, the two-line final *sententia* tells us, his enterprise would have been a success.

Erhardt's brief joke uses a range of comic devices now familiar in this context: incongruity (swimming trunks and salad oil, postcards and telegrams), unclassical language ("Junge, Junge", which may also be a direct parody of Hölderlin), modern views of classical names (Hero is clearly a male designation). But it is not only dependent upon knowledge of the tale (and the assumption that the reader was *not* asleep when studying Greek stories at school), but also of Ovid, whose epistolary approach is now a picture-postcard which — and this is of course another blow of the usual cruel fate, or possibly the postal gods — does not arrive in time. But then, picture-postcards are never a very high postal priority.

Things may be reduced to the absurd when the swimmer formerly known as Leander sets out in his trunks, covered in salad oil and with a rose between his teeth, having sent a postcard in advance. But it is still an Ovidian picture which has been thus reduced. Parody and burlesque only work fully when the original is known. Superficially the poem works as a joke in any case; knowing the classical background of the story makes it funnier; recognising Ovid (and possibly other literary allusions) makes it even more so.

20 Summary

The range here is from gentle mockery, linguistic play and register-games in French, Spanish, and later in German, down to outright scatology or bawdy farce in English. Comic versions of the tale are found, too, within prose and dramatic contexts. Shakespeare makes Pyramus and Thisbe and their thwarted love into a comedy by metadramatic extension through the rustics who portray them. The various burlesques of Hero and Leander also adapt the characters, so that Leander can become an apprentice barber, or a school usher, or an over-confident young man called Hero who rubs himself with salad oil and clasps a rose between his teeth as he swims. Hero can become a serving maid or a Bankside wench, and even her role as a priestess of Venus has various interpretations placed upon it, including what looks like pimping. She can be amorous to the point of being oversexed, and Leander can be daintily reserved. Much, too, is made of their parents, still sometimes seen (as in more

serious versions) as prohibiting the love, but equally as comic figures in their own right. Hero's mother in Wycherley's version has given birth to the quasi-goddess Hero after a liaison with (if we want to believe it) a god disguised as a sailor with his sea-boots on. Her father is a badly-dressed *hidalgo* who falls asleep in the temple in Góngora, and he snores like a trumpet in Scarron. Non-comic versions also play with the figure of the nurse, so that adaptations of her role in the burlesques are perhaps less surprising, although the English text attributed to James Smith does turn her into a voyeuse, rather than simply the go-between she often is in serious versions too. The plot, then, can be mocked by the distortion of the central characters and by the development of those who are either shadowy or not actually present in the early versions.

The tragic ending was always going to be difficult for the comic writers, but the ending becomes a main target for actual parody, especially the post-mortem extensions regularly found by other writers. The tragic outcome may be defused if it is treated with casual abruptness, as with Quevedo and also Reguera, and some of the German poems, or even abandoned completely by Sommerstorff's Leander himself; but more strikingly the postulated afterlife of the lovers can be mocked. Nashe's final metamorphosis of the pair into different fish separates them even after death except on the table, and Smith's marine metamorphosis just *before* Hero dies is particularly vulgar. The intrinsic optimism of the often-used Elysium motif is mocked neatly and simply by Wycherley, whose matter-of-fact assurance to the audience that there is no need to worry about the lovers underlines the fact that that premise is always essentially dubious.

In terms of style, the basis for much humour is in the contrast between the lofty and tragic theme and the language used to express it, especially in some of the Spanish and German burlesques. Keeping an eye on the classical sources, finally, provides a permanent basis for humour. Musaios is invoked (and ancient Greeks in general), while Ovidian epistles may be destined for an undignified final use, or transformed into unreliable picture-postcards.

Set to Music: Cantatas, Operas, and Musical Plays

Als Grundsatz gelte: Keine Oper solle vom Gesichtspunkt der Poesie betrachtet werden — von diesem aus ist jede dramatisch-musikalische Komposition Unsinn — sondern vom Gesichtspunkt der Musik, als ein musikalisches Bild mit daruntergeschriebenen erklärendem Texte.¹



Longer versions of the narrative of Hero and Leander which are set to or accompanied by music go back to the seventeenth century and range from a recitative by Nicholas Lanier in 1628 down to a *Rapsodia* on Hero and Leander composed in 2002/3 by Dmitri Terzakis, with grand opera, cantatas and musical comedy on the way. Individual sung lyrics and ballads (the latter frequently dramatic) are treated elsewhere.

Focus upon the literary reception of the story means that *purely* musical representations, such as tone-poems, orchestral ballads, and studies from Schumann to Victor Young must be excluded.² The question of ballets on the theme is rather more of a problem, and one at least merits attention. Louis-Jacques Milon (1766–1849) choreographed a *Héro et Léandre*, a ballet-pantomime in twelve scenes which was performed in 1799 at the Théâtre de la République in Paris. A synopsis of it was published, giving the story in just under twenty pages, noting the dances, and indicating a cast which included not only the priestess Hero and Leander as prince of Abydos, but people

- 1 Diary entry by Franz Grillparzer in 1819: *Tagebücher und Reiseberichte*, ed. Klaus Geißler (Berlin: Nation, 1981), p. 46 (619). “The basic rule should be: no opera should be considered from the standpoint of poetry — in this context any *dramatic*-musical composition is nonsense — but rather from a musical standpoint, as a musical image with an explanatory text underneath”.
- 2 The interface of music and narrative is a complex theoretical study in its own right. See the relevant recent publication by Malgorzata Pawlowska, *Exploring Musical Narratology. The Romeo and Juliet Myth in Music* (Hillsdale, NY: Pendragon, 2018). This is based on her Kraków PhD thesis, part of which is available online. The (highly dubious) use of the word ‘myth’ aside, the interesting study looks at the representation of love in particular.

from different places attending the festival of Venus, as well as Venus herself, Amor (who has a major part), Neptune and a number of *amorini*. Slightly later Armando Vestris (ca 1788–1825), who was a primo ballerino, choreographer and director, produced an *Ero e Leandro* in Naples in 1823. We have no idea how similar the performances were, but the pamphlet synopsis was also produced in Italian, slightly adapted and not mentioning Milon's name, though it noted that the music was by various composers.³ The introduction, a single page in Italian but rather longer in the French version, explains that the simple story has been augmented, though not basically altered, and that allegorical episodes have been added. The focus is upon the burgeoning of love between the two, and then their tragic deaths, apparently when Leander is returning reluctantly after the night of love: the title pages of the pamphlets carry translations into French and Italian respectively of Martial's epigram.

Amor helps Leander by ensuring that Hero cannot resist him, and the pair abandon themselves to delights. They are reluctant to part, but Leander is mindful of Hero's reputation. She is anxious for him, and indeed a storm takes Leander. No divine assistance is forthcoming, and by the light of her lamp Hero sees the exhausted face of Leander, who has succumbed to the waves, and she casts herself into the water. This, however, is an entertainment, and a happier ending is called for, something which happens in plays and in operas as well. Some *amorini* lift her up from the waves, after which we see all the gods of the sea carrying Leander, restored to life. The gods now celebrate their union. The ending closely resembles that of a spectacle with music by Pierre de la Garde, presented at Versailles in 1751 also including ballet, and both echo the ending of the seventeenth-century play by Bracciolini.⁴

The tale of a swimmer might seem to present even greater *a priori* difficulties for the musical stage, but again the story is so well-known that concentration can be upon the emotions in specific contexts (parting, waiting, wondering), rather than on the action. Perhaps even more acute with opera than with drama is the problem of finding proficient but dramatically and visually convincing singers for the principal roles. One early opera got around

3 L.-J. Milon, *Héro et Léandre. Ballet-pantomime en un acte* (Paris: Prix-Fixe, 1799). The synopsis is on pp. 11–28. *Ero e Leandro. Ballo pantomimo in un' atto ...* posta in iscena da Armando Vestris (Naples: Flautina, 1823), synopsis on pp. 7–19. Both are online. The straightforward pantomime production by Jean-Nicolas Servan has been noted in a previous chapter.

4 The tradition continued: there was a ballet by Jean Corelli Paracini (1779–1854), and far more recently the dance drama *Hero und Leander* by the Austrian Gerhard Wimberger (1923–2016) was performed in Wiesbaden in 1963.

this by using puppets, with the singers behind the scenes, and a later work used shadow-silhouettes.

While the full-scale serious operas — there are not very many that are readily available, even as libretti, although one of them has been set twice — can present the whole story, there is a focus upon Hero in cantatas and musical monodramas. The opportunity is regularly seized of expressing with the words, music and accompaniment the range of *her* emotions as they shift from desperate desire for Leander (and occasional jealous anxiety), to eager anticipation when the night is at last calm, to fear as the storm grows, with the attendant hope that he has not set out, to premonition, despair after the death of Leander, and then the desire for her own death, although any given work will not necessarily cover all of these.

It seems appropriate to consider first the smaller recitatives and cantatas (itself a flexible term), then the monodramas, and only then the full-scale operas, followed by other, less easily categorized (and often less serious) musical-dramatic works: dramatic scenes, a comic burletta, some plays with music, and even a 'spectacle' combining performance, song and ballet, which was put on at the court of Louis xv of France. Concentration upon the libretti means inevitably that only a part of each work is being examined, and Grillparzer's diary strictures, placed at the head of this chapter, must be taken seriously, even if his comments cannot be applied across the board. There remains with some works, too, the chicken-and-egg problem of whether a literary work was being set to music (with or without adaptation), or whether the libretto was written for the music. Further, a specific libretto might be based (closely or less so) upon a known and well-established literary work, such as Schiller's ballad or Grillparzer's play. The combination of words and music always requires compromise in any case: Tennyson famously complained that composers kept making him repeat himself in settings of his poems, and although this may not be quite as acute in a libretto, it does happen. Grillparzer complained in the same diary entry about this failing "in even the most thoughtful of librettists".

The literary sources used for some of the musical works have been discussed elsewhere, and do not need to be looked at again. The musical composition of 1832 *Hero und Leander. Dramatische Szene für eine Singstimme mit Begleitung des Orchesters* (dramatic scene for a [soprano] voice and orchestra) by Fanny Hensel (1805–47), the sister of Felix Mendelssohn, under whose name some of her work appeared, focuses, with two recitatives and two arias, upon the catastrophe; the lyrics by Fanny's husband, Wilhelm Hensel, were closely based upon Schiller's ballad. Schiller was also set to music by Friedrich

Ludwig Seidel (1765–1831).⁵ There are at least three operas — by Ernst Frank, Hermann Schroeder and Günter Bialas — which are based on Grillparzer's *Des Meeres und der Liebe Wellen*. That play also influenced Boito's opera libretto, but there are sufficient changes to merit separate consideration. One of the most recent musical productions (and a work which is difficult to categorise) is the *Rapsodia* of 2002/3, *Hero und Leander*, by Dimitri Terzakis (b. 1938), a composer of Greek origin but working in Germany a great deal. His (German) text is based upon Schiller and Ovid. The work is for a narrator, whose words outline the story, which has musical passages interspersed (piano, viola, tape). The importance of the *Heroides* is patent, as near the beginning of the work Poseidon causes a seven-day storm in the Hellespont.⁶

In the case of less well-known works, the case for inclusion or exclusion here can be far from clear. Giambattista Marino's poem 'Leandro' is found amongst his printed works, and it predates Brossard's cantata which is based upon it, so that it could have been treated elsewhere; we have in effect two separate works of different periods, causing a problem for the chronology as well. On the other hand, Manuel Bocage's 'cantata' does not seem to have had a composer and does not fit into the pattern of aria and recitative and is hence best considered with other epic versions. Works which *are* discussed here are bound together by the link with music, but consistency is as impossible as ever, and the concept of the 'play with music' remains a difficult one. Early dramas, such as that by Mira de Amescua, clearly contained songs, and conversely the substantial text we have by Antonio Filistri de Caramondani, which *is* included here, is dubbed a dramatic monologue.

Works are discussed as far as possible under the name of the poet or librettist, and of the composer only if the librettist is not known, or if, as sometimes is or may be the case, they are the same person. Occasionally, too, the composer of the *music* is not known, even though the text has survived as a libretto. With musical works, finally, it is often more difficult to track down usable texts, so that there will of necessity be places where works that are known about

5 Performances of Fanny Hensel's work are available online. For Seidel, a pamphlet with the text (plus another work by a different poet) was published: *Hero und Leander von Schiller.... Musik von Seidel* (Berlin: Hayn, nd. [1815–25]).

6 Dimitri Terzakis, *Hero und Leander. Rapsodia für Sprecher, Viola, Klavier und Tonband* (Bad Schwalbach: Editions Gravis, 2003). There is an important discussion of it between the composer and critics in: "Dimitri Terzakis: Hero und Leander ... Ein Preview zur Uraufführung", in: *Intime Textkörper. Der Liebesbrief in den Künsten*, ed. Ute Jung-Kaiser (Berne: Peter Lang, 2004), pp. 81–98 (with musical examples). A comparison with Edmond Haraucourt's dramatic poem, discussed below, would be possible.

could not be traced and must serve simply as further illustrations of how often and in how many contexts the tale was treated.

1 *Lamento di Leandro, Lagrime d'Ero: Cantatas and Musical Monodramas*

A composer as early as Claudio Monteverdi (1567–1645) is reported to have composed a 'Lament of Leander', and a cantata with the indicative title *Le lagrime d'Ero* (the tears of Hero) by the Italian baroque composer Vincenzo (II) De Grandis (1631–1708) remains in manuscript in the Este library in Modena.⁷ This kind of composition seems to have enjoyed continuing popularity, understandably so given the opportunity to focus musically upon real storms and on stormy emotions. As examples, Johann Simon Mayr (1763–1845) produced two such cantatas for voice and orchestra: *Ero* in Venice in 1791, with a libretto by Giuseppe Foppa [1760–1845], and in 1797 a cantata for voice, choir and orchestra called *La avventura di Leandro*, with a libretto ascribed to Contessa Velo, perhaps Isabella Scro(f)fa di Velo, although the dates are not clear. More recently the English organist and composer Charles Harford Lloyd (1849–1919) wrote a cantata *Hero and Leander* for the Worcester festival in 1884 which was apparently well-received; and the Belgian composer Berthe di Vito Delvaux (1915–2005) wrote early in her career (as op. 11 in 1940) a cantata *Héro et Léandre* for soloists, choir and piano, with a text by Félix Bodson.⁸

7 The work of De Grandis is in Modena, Biblioteca Estense, MS Mus F 1360. See Pio Lodi, *Catalogo delle opere musicali. Città di Modena* (Parma: Fresching, n.d.), p. 221. The manuscript contains various cantatas for solo voice with strings and bass continuo.

8 I have been unable to obtain full details of several more cantatas. The Italian Niccolò Antonio Zingarelli (1752–1837) appears to have written what the *Necrologia di Niccolò Zingarelli* (np., npub., 1857), p. 21, refers to as a monologue for solo soprano and strings with the title *Ero* (1786). Jellinek, *Sage*, p. 60 n. 1 refers to the cantatas by Mayr, to one by C[arlo] Ubaldi (b. ca 1770–80) of around 1800, and one by the prolific but forgotten operatic composer [Pietro] Generali (real name Mercandetti, 1773–1832). Generali's *Ero e Leandro* was performed in Venice in 1810, rather than Rome, and again in Munich in 1815 by the soprano Maria Theresia Sessi. The *Morgenblatt für gebildete Stände* vol. 9, no. 193 (14th August 1815), p. 772 refers to it as a melodrama in one act, and one wonders if the text was that by Florian or Caramondani. Jellinek notes further an *Ero e Leandro* by Pietro Raimondi (1786–1853), performed in Genoa in 1809 as a *monodramma* (presumably focused upon Hero) and other reference-lists add works equally difficult or impossible to trace. Georg Vierling (1820–1902) wrote a *Hero und Leander* for solo voices, choir and orchestra, of which a piano arrangement was published (Berlin: Trautwein, 1856), but *Ero* by Giuseppe Nicolini (1762–1842) could not be found. A ballet by 'Lefebvre' done in Paris in around 1800 remains obscure, as does a musical production by G. Bandl or Joh. Brandl, ostensibly in 1820. See not only Jellinek, but also the (related?)

Attention is paid in music to both protagonists, but Hero's emotions are at the centre of many cantatas, a composition defined usually as a sung work, often for a solo voice (sometimes for two or with choruses), plus an orchestral or piano accompaniment. There is usually a mixture of arias and recitatives, which can convey different effects. Such works can be almost like an opera without scenery or (much) action, and are of variable length. There is an overlap both with the 'dramatic scenes' offered by some composers, and with the musical monodramas, which usually place Hero in the foreground.

2 Nicholas Lanier, *Hero's Complaint to Leander* (1628)

Nicholas Lanier (1588–1666) was the first Master of the King's Musick, under Charles I, and his cantata, a musical "Recitative ... of the tragedy of Hero and Leander", was apparently much admired by the king when Lanier himself performed it. It is one of the earliest of the musical versions, and probably the first relevant combination of text and music. Lanier's cantata "Hero's Complaint to Leander" survives in print only with a bass continuo, although it is supposed to have been accompanied by a consort, probably a small string ensemble. It has been arranged in various ways in modern times.⁹ It presents Hero's changing emotions on the fateful night of Leander's death; although it is set in the voice of Hero, Lanier himself performed it, and it is regularly sung by a male voice. Later cantatas are more usually performed by sopranos (and occasionally counter-tenors).

The first part of Lanier's piece accuses Leander of cruelty ("Not com'st thou yet, my slothful love ... Who holds thee? Cruel!") while she is burning, like the taper. Her 'complaint' is extended; she claims that the sea has calmed because of her prayers, but that he is surely deaf to her entreaties. She even accuses him of having aroused her love only to abandon her. After this outburst, which is more direct than many, she calms a little, as the sea itself is calm, but now voices the Ovidian fear that he has found another love, already hinted at in

list in Amédée Boutarel, "Schiller — les oeuvres musicales qu'il a inspirées", in the Parisian journal *Le Ménestral* 71 (1905), nr. 3899 for December 17, 1905, pp. 401–3 (one of a series of articles). A more recent work by Franz Alfons Wolpert (1917–78) on *Hero und Leander* has also proved elusive.

9 The text (cited) is included in the notes to the recording (Nicholas Lanier, *Hero and Leander*, Metronome CD 1027, 1999) by the tenor Paul Agnew, accompanied by the lutenist Christopher Wilson and a string consort (two violins and a bass viol). Wilson's notes provide information about the piece, and an illustration of the sheet music of 1683 is included. The piece takes about fifteen minutes to perform (with a brief musical interlude halfway).

her question “who holds thee?” Suddenly, however, again as in Ovid, her mood changes and she reproaches herself — “Away with jealous fury” — and paints a different picture. Leander is at home under the wary eyes of his parents, an explanatory motif made real, but has managed to steal away, has come to the shore and flung off his clothes. He enters the water and parts the waves with his strong arms.

Hero now addresses the “peaceful winds”, begging them to provide for calm seas while he is swimming, but that they should then — and this is a nice variation — rage and storm so that he will be trapped and unable to return. Now, however, there is a sudden surge of genuinely stormy weather, and Hero implores Leander to return, not to tempt the angry sea. When she sees that the light has blown out, she can do nothing but plead to the gods, and in the morning she sees the body of Leander: “O dismal hour!/ Curst be the seas, these shores, this light, this tow’r”.

The display of Hero’s changing emotions is done without exaggeration, and the recitative does not afford precedence to the music. Hero’s jealousy and accusations are placed in the foreground, and though the gods are invoked occasionally, blame is placed upon the natural forces and the situation in which the pair had found themselves. Hero’s final lines join them: “In spite of fate, dear love to thee I come/ Leander’s bosom shall be Hero’s tomb”.

3 Giovanni Battista Marino, *Leandro* (17th Century)

An Italian poem of around a hundred rhymed lines by the prolific poet Giovanni Battista (Giambattista) Marino (1569–1625) was set to music by the later French composer Sébastien de Brossard (1655–1730) in the first decades of the eighteenth century, and the music and the setting of the words (sometimes with repeated phrases) survive in an autograph manuscript.¹⁰ We have, then, a case of an existing work set to music and adapted a little. The text presents the death of Leander, who swims naked at dead of night (*ahi! troppo audace!* — oh so daring!), trusting himself to the faithless sea when there is neither moon nor stars, but only the more splendid light of love. The goddess of love and the god of the sea are invoked (with an echo of Martial), and Leander dies, wanting to say more, but overcome by the waters. Hero despairs that she should still live.

10 The poem is in Giambattista Marino, *Poesie Varie*, ed. Benedetto Croce (Bari: Giuseppe Laterza, 1913), pp. 176–8, one of a group of related classical pieces. The music (with the text) is in the Bibliothèque Nationale (BNF Musique VH7–62), on the Gallica website under the composer’s name.

Only the culmination of the story is presented, and the little work is part of the renaissance focus upon Leander's death, but Brossard exploits in the music both the natural effects and the emotions of the protagonists.

4 Two Major Composers. Alessandro Scarlatti, *Ero e Leandro* (Late 17th Century); George Frideric Handel: *Ero e Leandro* (1707)

Two short cantatas for solo voice (soprano or contralto/counter-tenor) and small orchestral accompaniment, with texts in Italian, may be taken together, both presenting Hero at the final stage of the tragedy, even if Leander's name is retained in the title. Both have alternating recitatives and arias, but though comparable, there are differences in form and in content.

Alessandro Scarlatti (1660–1725) tells the last part of the story in six sections, beginning with a recitative (“Leandro, anima mea,” Leander, my soul) imploring Leander, as the one good thing she has, to come to her. Hope is in her heart, but it is to no avail, and the final part of the story is told through a narrator-voice.¹¹ George Frideric Handel (1685–1759) stresses the tragic aspect even more in showing us Hero faced with the death of Leander; this is genuinely Hero's lament. The musical pattern is the same as with Scarlatti, except that there is an extra (and unusual) final recitative, and all are sung by Hero. The work was composed in 1707, when Handel was in Rome at the beginning of his career, working with Cardinal Pietro Ottoboni (1657–1740), who may have provided the libretto. The work is sometimes known by the title of the first recitative “Qual ti reveggio, oh Dio”, expressing her shock at what she sees. The first (and vigorous) aria “Empio mare”, wicked sea, and the following recitative and aria stress the strength of her love and the desire for death. She literally tears her hair (“Questi dall mia fronte ...”, this from my head), destroying her beauty, and gives way to death. The final recitative refers to Leander's *gelide labbra*, icy lips.¹²

11 There is a recording of Scarlatti's cantata performed by the counter-tenor Gérard Lesne: *Scarlatti and Handel: Italian Cantatas* (Erato CD, 1996 and others).

12 Handel's cantata (HWV 159) is performed by the soprano Mária Zádori, *Handel Cantatas* (Hungaroton DDD88, 1995). The most recent printed edition of Handel's piece is in the *Hallesche Händel-Ausgabe* v/5, *Kantaten mit Instrumenten* III, ed. Hans Joachim Marx (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1999). The text and music can be found online. Georg Friedrich Händel officially and legally adopted the English form of his name in 1726, and as Percy Scholes insisted in the fourth edition of *The Oxford Companion to Music* (London: OUP, 1942), p. 393, this should be maintained in English writing, at least. On the association of Handel's *Ero e Leandro* with Ottoboni, see Donald Burrow, *Handel* (New York: OUP, 2nd ed. 2012), p. 41.

5 **Three French Cantatas, Two Serious and One Comic: Nicolas Clérambault, *Léandre, et Héro* (1713), François Bouvard, *Léandre et Héro* (1729) and Nicolas Racot de Grandval, *Léandre et Héro* (before 1753)**

Three French cantatas of the eighteenth century present the story with music, arranged for solo voice (usually soprano) and accompaniment (usually strings), and again mixing recitative and arias, covering the whole of the narrative from a mostly objective standpoint. All, perhaps coincidentally, have the male name first in the title, but together they provide a kind of vignette of the history of the reception of the tale. Two of them treat the narrative seriously, at least for the most part, though both defuse the tragic impact in their final sections, while the third presents the story openly as comic.¹³

(Louis) Nicolas Clérambault (1676–1749) composed a cantata for soprano and strings, setting an anonymous libretto. The opening is narrative — Leander is full of desires, but the sea is inhuman and he cannot reach Hero. In an aria Hero implores Venus for aid, and the seas become calm. In a further aria she asks Neptune not to endanger “le plus fidelle Amant du monde” (p. 25, the most faithful of all lovers). There is no background here, just an emphasis on the love. A recitative passage seems to show that the sea is calm, but then comes a sudden terrible storm, an *orage affreux* (p. 32), underlined in the music. The storm prevents Leander from seeing the *flambeau* which guides him, he dies, “Et dans les mêmes flots cette amante fidelle Finit sa vie et sa douleur” (p. 40, and in those same waters [his] faithful lover ends her life and her sorrows). Thus far the story has been presented briefly, but there are two further sections. The lovers are made immortal by Neptune, although it is not clear how this is effected:

Mais Neptune touché d'une flâme si belle
Reçoit ces deux amants au rang des immortels:
Et reparant du sort l'injustice cruelle,
Unit leurs tendres coeurs par des noeuds eternels. (p. 41)

13 Clérambault's work is in: *Cantates françoises mellées de simphonies II* (Paris: Foucault, 1713), pp. 18–48 (there is a Pyramus and Thisbe cantata in the same volume, pp. 58–79). François Bouvard, *Léandre et Héro, nouvelle cantate à voix seule, violoncello et basso continuo* (Paris: Jean-Baptiste-Christophe Ballard, 1729). [Nicolas] Grandval, *Six cantates serieuses et comiques* (Paris: Lambert/ Meangean, 1755). *Léandre et Héro* is no. III, pp. 33–53. This text has lyrics and orchestral indications. No librettist is given and the date is uncertain, though it seems to allude to Clérambault's version. All works are available on the Gallica website. All are cited with their spelling and capitalisation (which usually indicates the start of the metrical lines) as printed.

(But Neptune, touched by such a lovely flame takes the two lovers into the ranks of the immortals and, making good the cruel injustice of fate, unites their tender hearts with ties that are eternal).

There is one more aria, which comes in the same position as the moral in some of the early versions of the story. Here the address is to love, that it should join tender hearts together without injustice or caprice. The approach is not entirely tragic, therefore, in that the pair are given eternal love after death, while the final aria seems to indicate that this is not how things ought to be, and that other lovers should be more fortunate.

François Bouvard (ca 1684–1760) also presents the whole narrative, for solo voice, continuo and cello, but in an even more dramatic form and without post-mortem rescue, although again there is again a concluding address, this time to young lovers. There is an objective opening narrative and indications in the text (which is either anonymous or by Bouvard himself) of when Hero herself is speaking. The initial recitative tells us about the tower at Sestos, where every night Leander, guided by the flame, comes to enjoy love in the arms of *la fidele Héro*. No other background is given. One night the torch goes out, and the text poses the open but partially loaded question: “quelle main criminelle Sert ainsi les fureurs d’une Parque cruelle” (p. 7f. what criminal hand thus serves the fury of a cruel fate?). Venus is then asked if this was a just reward for the incense burned on her altar. Leander struggles to reach the shore and the impatient Hero urges him to come; the chronology of the narrative is telescoped in that we have already seen Leander’s struggles. Hero echoes Ovid in very brief form, as she admits that her heart is troubled by *mille préjugés affreux* (p. 9) a thousand terrible imagined fears — which include infidelity, and the anger of the gods.

In a new recitative Leander dies, and Hero’s fears and anger at the gods — “Dieux jaloux, Dieux crudels” (p. 11f. jealous, cruel gods) — are justified. But she is defiant: “Non, je ne seray plus sujette à vos caprices”, but will chose “la mort, moins barbare que vous” (p. 12. No, I shall no longer be subject to your capriciousness ... death [is] less barbaric than you). With that, she hurls herself from the tower, and the day that ended her love also ended her life. The promise of immortality in Clérambault is absent, but the defiance of the gods in her despair is striking. Who did extinguish the light, then? Fate, the gods? The famous story may be a tragic one, but once more we are assured that love need not always work out that way. A final section offers a slightly different summary, addressed to “Jeunes Coeurs, que Venus engage”, young hearts in love (p. 13), urging them to follow their love despite this sad tale, and to hope for a better destiny.

The ease with which this tragic love-story can be treated comically by being made absurd is neatly demonstrated by the third piece in this group of French cantatas. Amongst the posthumously published *cantates serieuses et comiques* by Nicolas Racot de Grandval (1676–1753) is a work which uses both words and music for a burlesque. The lovers both die at the end, it is true, but their tragic deaths are presented in an anything but tragic fashion, and there is a good amount of absurdity on the way. Unlike the other two cantatas (that by Clérambault seems to be echoed in places), there is no final attempt to moderate the tragedy, but this time none is necessary.

The story is again told objectively, with indication of direct speech from time to time. We are to hear a tender story of extremely famous lovers, and the familiarity of the classical story is played upon throughout. It opens when these beautiful young people come together, and Leander's courtship has him referring to Hero as "ma mignone, Ma belle bouchone" (p. 35, sweetie-pie, cutie), for example, and there are occasional asides to this being entirely normal adolescent behaviour. We do not know why they are separated, but Leander is in any case unconcerned. "Quoi que l'Hellespont soit bien large, Lui dit le courageux garçon, Avec grand plaisir je me charge, De nager ainsi qu'un poisson" (p. 38, though the Hellespont be quite wide, the brave lad told her, I shall undertake with great pleasure to swim like a fish). Hero has a rather specific worry: "Mais si quelques requin vous mange ..." (p. 38, what if a shark should eat you), to which the reply is that it would be even odder if he swallowed a shark whilst *en route*. Much of this is for the sake of the rhyme, which is extravagant throughout.

The pair wait eagerly for nightfall, when Leander, who is, we hear, a good swimmer, dives in (with faint echoes of Ovid) "sans bruit Sans timon et sans voiles" (p. 40, without a sound, without a rudder, and without any covering). Leander, who is here as in Clérambault "le plus fidele Amant du monde" asks Neptune to protect him. However, as he is approaching the shore, Boreas changes the calm seas with *un orage affreux* (also in Clérambault). The music underlines the point, as might be expected, but this time comically by inserting a downward scale of eight semi-quavers on the single word *orage* (p. 43).

Leander's prayers contain a good number of the contrived rhymes (p. 48: *obole/ faribole/ bricole/ caracole*, obol, nonsense, token, prance), and his last words are memorable: "Hola ho, quel vertigo ... J'abime dans l'eau ... Adieu Héro, quel triste sort! C'en est fait ... Je suis mort" (p. 47f. Hola ho, what vertigo! Into the water down I go ... Adieu, Hero, What a fate so dread, that's it then ... I am dead). The last part is exaggeratedly slow in the music, one syllable to a bar consisting of a minim and a minim rest. Hero, back in the tower, suspects misfortune, and when it is clear that she has lost Leander, tells us "Ce la m'est

bien dur" (p. 49, that's pretty tough for me). She decides that she cannot live without Leander and will follow him down to Pluto's realm: "Precipitons nous hardiment, Dans l'élément Qui m'a ravi mon pauvre amant" (p. 52, Let us throw ourselves boldly into the element which has taken away my poor lover). She rejects the idea of going back to the tower in order to jump better, but will follow him in a more genteel fashion — "Allons, marchons ..." (p. 52, OK, let's get on with it). Her ending is as casually treated as his, and the whole mocks the story, while retaining in slightly telescoped form the main elements: the love, the swimming, and the double death. Boreas acts capriciously, but the other gods seem to take very little notice of what is going on. The three French cantatas taken together raise questions about how to approach a story of great renown: can we admire it as tragedy, while trusting that it will not happen to other lovers? Who *did* put out the flame? And should it be taken seriously at all?

6 The Musical Monodrama

The monodrama is more extended than the cantata, though shorter than a full-scale opera. Three early nineteenth-century examples concentrate yet again on Hero. The influence of the staged monodrama of Jean-Pierre de Florian (imitated by Ferdinand Kämmerer) from the later part of the preceding century is always possible.

7 Karl Alexander Herklots, *Hero* (1800, 1817)

Karl (or Carl) Alexander Herklots (1759–1830), who provided a German text for some of Mozart's Italian operas, wrote a monodrama which was set to music more than once, the first time by Bernhard Anselm Weber (1764–1821) in 1800, and secondly by Georg Abraham Schneider (1770–1839) in 1817. Jellinek dismissed the brief work as "ganz unbedeutend", completely insignificant.¹⁴ Hero, the sole figure, is accompanied by a slave-girl, who has a name (Myris) but no words, and who functions simply as someone to whom Hero can address comments ("Ha! Myris! Sieh!", p. 6, Ah! Myris! Look! Herklots is fond of the exclamation mark). A brief introduction notes that everyone knows the story and tells

14 C. Herklots, *Hero. Ein lyrisches Monodrama* (Berlin: npub., 1800). The title page refers to music by B. A. Weber. The text occupies only nine pages. The online copy from the Library of Congress is cited with spelling, punctuation and capitalisation. See Jellinek, *Sage*, p. 62.

us that the theme of this lyrical drama is “Heros letzte, fruchtlose Erwartung ihres Geliebten, in einer stürmischen Herbstnacht” (p. 3f. Hero’s final and fruitless wait for her lover on a stormy Autumn night).

In this short monodrama, which alternates passages of recitative with arias, Hero is a princess, literally a *Königskind*, but in contrast to the ballads, Leander is not royal. He is, we hear as she recalls the beginnings of their love, *ein armer Hirt*, a poor shepherd (p. 10). The obstacle this time is the severity of her parents and the difference in social status between the lovers, an explanation also found elsewhere. Hero seems to have lived in the temple of Venus since she was a child, and her words pre-echo Grillparzer’s Hero to the extent that one wonders if the dramatist knew the work, which he could have seen in Vienna before 1820. As a child Hero was calm and untroubled in the temple:

Als Priesterin
lebt ich in dir den Lenz der Jugend hin,
unschuldig, ohne Sehnsucht, still und heiter!
Jetzt lieb ich! (p. 8)

(As a priestess I lived in you [that is, the temple] throughout the springtime of my youth, innocent, without longings, quiet and cheerful! Now I love!)

Her emotions shift as usual from fond memories of the love for Leander, to anxieties and declarations that he should not come. But he dies, and in her final recitative she declares: “Entschieden ist auch meine Wahl! / Vereinigt mich mit Ihm, ihr Nereiden!” (p. 13, My choice is also decided! Unite me with Him [capitalised in the text], you nereids). It is not easy to gainsay Jellinek’s negative judgement of the work, but the reduction of Leander to a poor visitor from Abydos at least offers an explanation of the problem. Of more significance is Hero’s own comment that she was calm and happy before meeting Leander. It is love itself which leads to tragedy.

8 Antonio Filistri da Caramondani, *Ero. Monologo drammatico* (1807)

The Venetian Filistri da Caramondani (1760–1811) was a poet and librettist who worked as court poet and theatre director in Berlin. Some of his libretti were for identifiable operas, but the position of his *Ero*, which is termed a dramatic monologue, but which is rather longer than that by Herklots, is not completely clear. The text was first published in 1807 in an edition in which the

rhymed Italian original on the left-hand page is faced on the right by a German translation.¹⁵ The sole vocal role is once more Hero as priestess of Venus at Sestos, although we do get a glimpse of Leander and he is listed as a non-speaking part. The edition tells us that Hero was performed — it is not clear when — by the soprano Maria Marchetti Fantozzi (ca 1760–ca 1800[?]), who was prima donna at the Royal Opera in Berlin.¹⁶ The alternation in the text of lyrical and other passages look as if the performance was like that of the earlier cantatas with recitatives and arias. At one point, however, Hero is directed to read aloud, and at another she talks in her sleep. This piece is comparable with Florian's work in several respects, even down to the glimpses of Leander swimming; but Florian's text was in prose, and the printed text of this *Ero* refers to the music as having been by various composers.¹⁷ Independent orchestral music is also indicated in the stage directions at several points.

A preface gives an account of the story, telling us that Hero is a priestess, providing no additional details, but giving Ovid's *Heroides*, Vergil, and Musaios as sources. Hero's sacerdotal role, which is not developed, and the fact that they die together are the main links with Musaios, but the *Heroides* are dominant, with verbal echoes and even the sending of a letter from Leander to Hero, albeit not by way of a sailor, but with the help of a dove, always proper to Venus, but here used as a carrier-pigeon. As *Intendant* at the theatre in Berlin, the librettist presumably directed performances; the text has detailed stage-directions and calls for an indication of Leander swimming in the tempestuous Hellespont, visible to the audience (but not to Hero). This effect is found in Florian and Kämmerer and was probably also used in some of the pantomime versions. Hero is presented full of anxiety about whether Leander still loves her, and she is in a state of exhaustion after seven sleepless nights. She receives a letter from Leander telling her that he will come that very night, ensures that the nurse (who does not appear) has set up the lantern, and then she falls asleep, dreaming of Leander. She wakes to the storm, Leander is drowned, and she commits suicide. The debts to the classical writers are clear, although the presentation of the catastrophe is a little different.

15 Filistri, *Ero, monologo drammatico/Hero, ein Monodrama* (n.pl., n. pub., 1807), online. The text gives no more of the librettist's name but indicates his positions in Berlin. The volume is of 31 pages only. The Italian text is cited.

16 On the singer, see John A. Rice, "Mozart and his Singers: the Case of Maria Marchetti Fantozzi, the First Vitellia", *The Opera Quarterly* 11 (1995), 31–52 (and online). The article — which contains a portrait — does not mention this work. It is unclear when the singer died, so that the chronology is difficult here for several reasons.

17 Jellinek, *Sage*, p. 81f. seems to take Florian's work as an opera, however.

Having been waiting for seven nights, Hero is afraid, as in Ovid, “Che non timor del vento,/ Ma un nuovo amor lunge il trattenga” (p. 10, that it is not fear of the winds [that keep him away], but that he has been ensnared by a new love). Almost at once, however, she rejects this terrible suspicion — *O sospetto crudel!* He is faithful to her, of course, “ma ov’è quel cor, che non sospetti, ed ami” (p. 12, but no heart can love without suspicion — another Ovidian line, *Hero Leandro* 109). It is at this point that a dove flies in, and Hero takes it as an omen. It carries a message from Leander which she reads out. The stage direction requires a clear but agitated and trembling voice (p. 12). In the letter he claims that he can wait no longer and will come whatever the weather, which causes Hero more anguish, but she prays to Venus and the seas are calmed. The stage direction now indicates that the music is to be slower, harmonious and peaceful (“alquanto lento, mà armoniosa, e piacevole”, p. 16). She promises to burn incense to the goddess, sure that her fate will now be better: “La sortamia/ Siempre miglior sarà,” (p. 18).

The seven sleepless nights have exhausted Hero, however, and she falls asleep, while the music rises to indicate the rising of the sea. Hero speaks in her sleep, the music punctuating her fragmented words, which indicate her erotic dream (Ovid, *Hero Leandro*, 60–63): “Arido lin ... ti appressa ...” (p. 22, dry cloth ... come closer ...). While she sleeps, however, the storm has risen; she wakes up and realises that the night is indeed stormy, and everything is dark. There is no direct mention of the light being extinguished, but a stage direction asks for lightning to illuminate her, and there is the sound of thunder. She prays to the gods — to Neptune as well — but the winds blow away her prayers: “Ah! Seco porta il vento/ Le preci mie” (p. 26). Hero comes to the front of the stage and we see Leander swimming, but she does not look in his direction. Rather she persuades herself that he is still in Abydos, until she does at last see his corpse. She curses the tyranny of the gods, but her reaction is defiant. The gods, she declares, will not have a complete victory, because they cannot stop her joining him in death at least:

Non vincerete appieno;
 Nò, impedir non potrete
 Ch’io lo raggiunga lu sen di Morte almeno (p. 30)

Leander is to make Lethe’s boatman wait for her, and she commits suicide; the stage directions allow either jumping into the sea or using a dagger (*oppure cava un pugnale*, p. 30). Fate was not kind to her in life, but in the *Regno di morte*, the realms of death, she will provide new tokens of her faith: “Nuovi pegni darò di mia fè” (p. 30).

Elements of this version are found elsewhere, even the possibility of death with a dagger. Hero sometimes claims her own death as a victory, but her defiance of the gods in the assertion that her death will detract from their apparent victory, is less usual. As with Florian's spoken monodrama, this would have been a challenge for the sole performer (hence presumably the choice of Maria Marchetti Fantozzi), presenting a range of emotions: jealousy, self-reproach, anxiety, fear, false hope and finally defiance.

9 J. B. de Saint-Victor, *Héro et Léandre* (1806, 1816)

Comparable with the monodrama of Filistri da Caramondani is the work of Jacques-Maximilien Benjamin Bins, Comte de Saint-Victor (1772–1858), who was born in what is now the Dominican Republic. He provided a libretto for two prize-winning cantatas (given awards in Paris in 1806 and in Rome in 1810), the first with music by the barely-known composer G. Bouteiller fils (presumably his contemporary), the second setting by the slightly better-known Frenchman, Marie-Desiré Martin-Beaulieu (1791–1863).¹⁸ The cantata is an operatic scene centred again upon Hero on the last night of Leander's life, and is more circumscribed even than Filistri da Caramondani's *Ero*. Some effects are called for, and Hero's death concludes the work. The solo soprano part has repetitions in the lyrics, and the story — the basics of which are assumed — is told as much or more through the orchestral music. There is a reference at the start to Hero's having set up the guiding torch, but it is not made entirely clear in the text that it is extinguished as Leander crosses the stormy sea, nor even that Leander is swimming. The word *nauffrage*, shipwreck, is used (perhaps echoing Ovid, of course), and there is a reference to returning to port, although his body is washed up on the shore.

The scene passes from peace and harmony to tempest and storm. All is peaceful at the opening as the sun sets, and Hero implores the winds and the Hellespont to remain calm so that her lover can come to her. Again she invokes Venus, to whom she was consecrated a priestess, we hear, at birth, stressing the beauty of her and Leander's love. She has always served Venus, she says: "mes mains n'ont point profané tes autels" (2of., my hands have never profaned your altars). But she is already fearful — "le moindre bruit m'agite" (p. 35, the

¹⁸ G. Bouteiller fils, *Héro et Léandre*, *Cantate*, paroles de M. J. B. de St Victor (Paris: Nadermann, [1806]). I cite this text by page number; it is a full orchestral score, plus a piano accompaniment at the foot of the page (Gallica). Beaulieu's *Héro et Léandre*, *Cantate* was also published (Paris: Chatot, 1810), but I have not been able to verify that the text is identical.

slightest noise worries me) — of the treacherous sea. The waters are rising and her first reaction is that he will not come: “Un nuage des nuits a voilé le flambeau” (p. 45f. the clouds of night have obscured the torch). As the tempest grows, she worries what Leander is doing, hoping he will return to the port in Abydos.

The storm begins at about the halfway point of the work, and the score indicates that it continues to the end of her *cavatine*, but “toujours d’une manière sourde et très éloigné” (p. 54, always muted and distant). Hero continues to implore Leander to return, and as the storm increases in strength she exclaims to Venus that she has not deserved her anger. There is thunder and lightning, and eventually she sees Leander: “Dieux, c’est Léandre — O destin qui me tue” (p. 78, Gods, it is Leander, oh fate, which is my death). The music is now *allegro agitato* as Hero repeats several times her question to Venus: “O Vénus, fatale déesse, Que t’ai je fait pour me trahir?” (p. 92 and elsewhere; Oh Venus, fatal goddess, what have I done to you to be thus betrayed?). But she knows now that she and Leander will be victims of jealous fate and the perfidious sea (p. 96f.) They will be reunited only in the depths. The final stage direction is that she casts herself into the sea. The focus is on Hero’s fears of the natural forces, and her attitude towards Venus in particular, whom she considers, perhaps naively, even though she was dedicated to her at birth, to have served well, and feels betrayed therefore.

10 Further Musical Scenes

Although we have details of several other ‘scenes’, locating information and texts is difficult. The Polish composer Karol Kurpiński (1785–1857), for example, noted in 1820 that he had written a *scena liryczna*, a lyrical scene with the title *Ero i Leander* in 1816, but the work has not survived.¹⁹ Various composers produced relevant pieces styled ‘musical scenes’. A *scena* by George Alexander Macfarren (1813–87) called *Hero and Leander*, which involved several singers, was performed in London in January 1836, and was dismissed in a notice in *The Athenaeum* (1, nr 431, p. 90) as “poor and commonplace”. There was a concert-*scena* of the same name by Arthur Goring Thomas (1850–92) in 1880, and again at the end of the nineteenth century the French composer Arthur Coquard (1846–1910) wrote a *scène dramatique* for solo soprano voice with orchestral/piano accompaniment entitled *Héro*, which focusses once again on

19 See Katarzyna Płońska, *Katalog Tematyczny Oper Karola Kurpińskiego* (Warsaw: Institut Muzyki i Tańca, 2015), p. 4.

her emotions as she confronts the fatal storm. In 1898 the Danish composer Ludvig Schytte (1848–1909) produced his *Hero* (op. 111) as a *dramatisk sangscene*, a one-act monodrama also concentrating on Hero, with orchestral accompaniment, performed on 25 September 1898 in Copenhagen. The libretto was by Poul Theodor Levin (1869–1929).²⁰

11 Operas

Full scale opera libretti on the theme include the Italian texts by Camillo Badovero in the seventeenth century and by Arrigo Boito (used by two different composers) in the later nineteenth, plus a French libretto by Jean-Jacques Lefranc, as well as various works based directly upon Grillparzer (whose play also influenced Boito). The names of several further works which may be operas (the genres are not always clear) are listed in various places, including a footnote by Jellinek, the information in which was provided for him by a friend. Sometimes such references are simply imprecise; the works concerned might be cantatas, or something else entirely, as in the case of Wenzel Steinhardt's accompanying music for a play. Some texts are difficult to trace, although occasionally it is possible to establish details of their performance. Frequently these works are by prolific, but now almost completely forgotten composers. Thus the Italian Ferdinando Paer (Pär, Paër, 1771–1839) did indeed write a full-scale *Ero e Leandro* which was performed in Naples in August, 1794; a printed text (there is a copy in the Library of Congress) gives some details of the cast of singers, but it is not readily accessible.²¹ In some cases, however, it is not possible to identify at all a given work noted in secondary writings as an opera.²² Titles can also be misleading: the opera *Königskinder* by

20 Arthur Cocquard, *Hero. Scène dramatique* (Paris: J. Hamelle, n.d. [?1890]). The text of this voice and piano arrangement apparently has 17 pages. Ludvig Schytte, *Hero. Dramatisk Sangscene* (Copenhagen: Hansen, n.d.) and in German as *Hero. Dramatische Gesangscene* (Leipzig: Hansen, 1898). There are various editions, some for piano only, and also a vocal score.

21 Ferdinando Paer, *Ero e Leandro. Drame per musica* (Naples: Vincenzo Flauto, 1794). The work is available only as a printed text. The libretto seems to have been by Francesco Saverio Salfi (1759–1832).

22 Jellinek's list, *Sage*, p. 61 n. 1, refers to an *Ero e Leandro* by C. Coccia in London in 1827, and this is repeated in the introduction to the edition of Musaios by Luciano Migotto, *Museo*, in 1992, p. xxxvi. Boutarel, "Schiller ..." also notes the work, with a question-mark. Although Carlo Coccia (1782–1873) wrote several operas, the only one produced in London in 1827 seems to be a *Maria Stuarda*. If there is a Hero and Leander opera, perhaps it was also based on Schiller? See also above, n. 7 for further texts listed by Jellinek and Boutarel.

Engelbert Humperdinck (1854–1921), which began as a spoken melodrama for which he supplied the music (performed in Munich in 1897) and then developed into a full opera (New York, 1910) is not, in spite of the title, linked with the *Königskinder* ballads.²³

Against this, there is a direct reference to the tale of Hero and Leander in another opera, namely the *Sappho* (1851) of Charles Gounod (1818–93), which has a libretto by Émile Augier (1820–1889). The tale of Sappho, who drowned herself when her lover Phaon failed to return, is treated in the *Heroides*, and is occasionally linked with our narrative. In his early opera, Gounod has Sappho herself sing in the first act an ode on how Hero waits in her solitary tower for Leander to swim to her. She waits anxiously, but eventually sees his blond head, he reaches her and she is united with the “vainqueur des flots retentissans”, the conqueror of the resounding waves. The song is positive, and of course ironic.²⁴

12 Camillo Badovero, *Il Leandro/ Gl'Amori Fatali* (1679 and 1682)

Count Camillo Badovero (fl. 1662–94; different versions of his name appear, such as Badoero), originally from Rome, but who worked in Venice, was a prolific writer of libretti. His *Il Leandro* was performed at the Teatro alle Zattere in Venice in 1679 and again at the Teatro S. Moisè in 1682 under the new title *Gl'Amori Fatali* (the doomed lovers).²⁵ Both titles are appropriate, since Leander is this time at the centre of two unfortunate love-stories. The work seems to have been presented on these particular occasions using wooden marionettes, with singers and musicians behind the scenes. The music was by the castrato Francesco Antonio Mamiliano Pistocchi(ni) (1659–1726).²⁶

The *opera buffa* by Nicola Bonifacio Logroscino (1698–1764 or 5) based on *Il Leandro* by the eighteenth-century writer Antonio Villani (Naples: npub., 1744) is not our story, and simply has a central figure with that name.

23 The play is by Ernst Rosmer (that is, Elsa Bernstein, 1866–1949). See *Reclams Opern- und Operettenführer* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 22. ed. 1962), pp. 379–82.

24 Émile Augier, *Sappho. Opéra en trois actes*. Musique de ... Charles Gounod (Brussels: Lelong, 1851), p. 18f. (online).

25 Camillo Badovero, *Il Leandro. Dramma per musica* (Venice: Gio. Francesco Valvasense, 1679); *Gl'Amori Fatali* (Venice: Gio. Francesco Valvasense, 1682) and (Verona: Stamparia Nuova, 1685). *Il Leandro* is mistakenly listed online (Google Books) under *L'Alessandro*. (Citation is from this text, although it has misprints and some misnumbering of scenes.) The second version, online via the Library of Congress, is an imperfect copy.

26 See on the performances Leone Allaci, *Drammaturgia* (Venice: Giambattista Pasquali, 1755), col. 479 (“in una casa particolare con figure de legno, cantando i Musici dietro il

The opera is in three acts, with a somewhat extravagant plot which does not always have a great deal to do with the known narrative, although Leander does drown, and the couple are united in Elysium. It resembles in some respects the plays by Bracciolini and Mira de Amescua of half a century earlier, and there are various motifs which echo those plays. Jellinek gives a dead-pan (though not entirely accurate) plot-summary, concluding with the acid comment that “Mit einem Operntext soll man nicht um Wahrscheinlichkeit rechnen” (one should not count on plausibility in an opera libretto). He wonders how Hero, dedicated to Venus at Sestos, is able to make visits to Abydos (albeit in disguise), and notes that, since this is the case, “braucht der arme Leander nicht zu ertrinken” (poor Leander doesn’t actually need to drown). The familiar element of his heroic swim is not just marginalised (it is not clear why he does so anyway), but was apparently actually unnecessary.²⁷

And yet. Given that this is an early opera, and that additions are needed since the tale is so brief, the plot may be convoluted, but the convolutions are those of love, and this version also has an unusual take on the role of the gods. Some of the arias are attractive as lyrics. Badovero’s introduction tells us that “L’Historia viene scritta da Museo Poeta, & autenticata dà Ouidio nelle sue Epistole” (p. A4r), the story was written by Musaios the Poet and confirmed by Ovid in his letters, a statement which is not entirely straightforward even if we assume that the archaic Musaios is implied rather than the Grammarian. The list of *dramatis personae* is already indicative: the main roles include Tigrane, lord of Abydos, Leander, his favourite, and Leander’s servant, Millo. Tigrane has a mistress (*amica lasciva*) Lucilla, who is in love with Leander, and is herself loved by Tigrane’s secretary, Arbace. Hero is the virgin priestess but is able to disguise herself as the Moorish Gipsy with the significant name Belsirena. There are other minor roles, as well as choruses of huntsmen, sailors and others. Venus and Amor appear, as well as *amorini* and nereids. The opening pages of the text list some dances, and note *machine*, special effects, which include not only the carrying off the principals on clouds, but the slightly surprising “Tramutatione d’Hero in vn Albero di Leandro” (A5v), the transformation of Hero into what is presumably an Oleander (*oleandro*). This (in the event rather temporary) transformation is done by Amor/Cupid, and Leander is at that point already dead. Happily there is no overt pun (as in the poem of only a few years earlier by von Hohberg). The dances and effects presumably indicate that it was not intended always (or perhaps exclusively) to be performed by marionettes.

Scene”). Both performances seem to have been done with puppets. The composer is usually listed by his nickname as Pistocchini, although Pistocchi is the formal name.

27 Jellinek, *Sage*, p. 60f.

Hero's aria, opening the first act in the temple of Venus at Sestos: "Bella stella del Mar/ Madre d'Amore" (Bright star of the sea, mother of Amor) is worth a brief mention because it so strongly recalls the Marian hymn "Ave maris stella/ Dei Mater alma ...". The first part of the act is devoted to the gradual coming together of Hero and Leander, as she becomes the (Ovidian) goddess he adores ("Tu sei la Dea, ch'adoro", p. 17), and they agree to meet. In spite of the dangers of the Hellespont, he will be guided by the light from the high tower of the temple. We now, however, discover that Lucilla loves Leander, although her declaration of love to him is roundly rejected. The act concludes with a chorus and a dance.

The next act is in Abydos. Arbace confesses *his* love for Lucilla, but then Hero appears disguised as a *cingara Mora* (p. 27), literally a Moorish Gipsy and fortune-teller. Her solo aria, in which she refers to herself as *Vedova e sposa* (p. 28), widow and wife, wonders at the way she had abandoned her honour, telling herself that she is no longer the same Hero. Leander is still adamant in his rejection of Lucilla ("Non posso, non voglio amor, datti pace ..." p. 32, I cannot, I do not want love, give me peace ...), and now Lucilla enlists the disguised Hero to assist her, and gives her a letter for Leander. The scene is overheard by Arbace. Once again the act ends with a dance.

In the final act Hero gives the letter to Leander, who tears it up without reading it (p. 38), to the delight of Hero. Lucilla vows revenge and is joined by Arbace. At this point the familiar narrative takes over, albeit briefly, as Leander prepares to swim to Sestos. He sets out, is overtaken by the storm (his aria turns to a recitative asking the winds to calm), and he drowns, commending his soul to Hero. Venus and the nereids carry off his body. Lucilla and Arbace come to confront Hero, Arbace draws his dagger to kill Hero, but wounds Lucilla, "mentre Hero viene transformata in vna pianta de Leandro, per commando d'Amore" (stage-direction p. 43f., while Hero is turned into an oleander on the command of Amor). Lucilla and Arbace are taken away for execution (Arbace will at least die beside the woman he loves), and the final scene is set in the *Campi Elisi*, to which Hero and Leander are taken on a cloud. Venus has a final song rejoicing that the faithful lovers will now eternally enjoy the desired sweetness.

Once more the speculative post-mortem happy ending is made concrete. Notable about this version, however, is that the gods are entirely positive, and are on the side of the lovers. The death of Leander is in a storm, and he is a victim of the treacherous Hellespont. Nor does Hero actually drown herself, but undergoes a brief metamorphosis prior to being transported to join Leander. Perhaps the sin of suicide was being avoided in a work which sounds in some areas almost Christian? The love is clandestine because of Hero's role as priestess, and she is indeed concerned at the path she has taken — leading

her to pursue Leander in disguise and to become involved with Lucilla. But there are echoes of Ovid's text nevertheless: Leander sees her as a goddess, but Hero's fear in the *Heroides* that she might have a rival is here tested and vindicated directly by Leander. The roles of Arbace and Lucilla, however, echo a parallel situation in the earlier drama by François de la Selve. This version still leaves plenty of the questions open — one of them being Jellinek's question of why Leander has to swim when Hero could apparently get to Abydos easily enough — but the basic narrative has provided for a more complex display of the problems of love.

13 Jean-Jacques Lefranc, *Léandre et Héro, Tragédie* (1750)

The five-act opera of Hero and Leander with a libretto by Jean-Jacques Lefranc, Marquis de Pompignan (1709–84) and music by René de Galard de Béarn, Marquis de Brassac (1699–1771) was performed at the Royal Academy of Music in Paris on April 21, 1750, and like that of Badovero it is again significant in terms of plot adaptation. It also avoids the problem of on-stage swimming by ignoring it altogether. Leander, who is Hero's lover from the outset, is a prince of Abydos, who comes to claim her with a battle-fleet, but his vessel is sunk in a great storm in the final act. Although it is impossible to do justice to the triple combination of story, stage effects (including dance), and music, some idea of the presentation of the opera can be gained from the beautifully engraved orchestral score with the libretto.²⁸ The work has five acts (after a separate prologue), with four principal singers: Hero, a priestess of Venus; Leander, Prince of Abydos; Athamas, ruler of Sestos; and Thermilis, who is in love with Leander. In addition, there are small roles for Arbate, an adjutant of Athamas, and for Leander's captain, Arcas, plus occasional solo parts in the various choruses of shepherds and shepherdesses, priestesses, sailors, and others. There are also gods and allegorical figures; the second act has a trio performed by Jealousy, Hatred, and Vengeance, and there is also a chorus of *Passions malheureux*, unhappy emotions. There are repeated passages at the end of some of the acts, some entr'acte music, and a good number of dances (gavotte [musette], rigaudon, chaconne, loure, passepied, and some *danses effrayantes*, performed by the *Passions malheureux*). The work must have been

28 *Léandre et Héro, Tragédie, Mise en musique* (Paris: Boivin and Le Clerc [ca 1750]). The work is available online from the library in Toulouse (cited here by page number and with the spelling of the original). No names are given on the title page, though the date and place of the performance are indicated.

impressive with its large cast, and the stage directions call for various effects, such as characters descending on clouds, the stage darkening, and a great tempest at the end. This is opera as spectacle.

Hero and Leander are lovers, of course, but each has a rival, both powerful in their own ways, and both malicious when their love is not returned. There is, it seems, a lighthouse at Sestos, but the much-mentioned flame is the flame of love, not an actual guiding torch. The gods are active, as are the (violent) winds, but much more instrumental are what might be called the henchmen of Amor, the 'unhappy passions' caused by love — rage, despair, vengeance, hatred, jealousy. And yet at the end Leander is still drowned and Hero, blaming herself, commits suicide, in the hope that they will be joined in the after-life.

A prelude is set in the temple of Janus, and we hear that there has been a war; the opera proper begins in the temple of Venus, however, and almost at once demonstrates a development in the story. Hero is loved by the tyrant Athamas, but since she is a priestess, she can defy him while she is in the temple and is able to wait for her lover Leander. We hear that he has swum the Hellespont to reach her, but this part of the narrative is in the past. Hero meanwhile trusts in Venus: "*Protège au moins les coeurs fidelles,/ Trop de coeurs inconstans deshonnorent les loix*" (p. 37, at least protect faithful hearts; too many inconstant hearts dishonour the laws). A long pastoral scene follows, with choruses of shepherds dancing and singing about the pleasures of love (which outweigh crowns and sceptres). At the end of the scene Thermilis arrives and asks Hero to speak to the goddess on her behalf and reveals that she is in love with a prince called Leander. While Hero is in confusion, a triumphant song begins, and we learn that Athamas has returned in triumph. Hero, left alone, first harbours suspicions about Leander, but immediately rejects them as the act ends.

In a wood dedicated to Amor, Athamas now explains to Arbate that the ungrateful Hero prefers her altars to her king, and in a solo aria declares his love. When she arrives, he wishes to marry her: "*Partagés avec moi l'empire des mortels*" (p. 68, share with me the worldly empire), which will be more of an honour than serving Venus. The interesting notion that Hero is consciously using her role as a priestess as protection, to avoid being with anyone but Leander, is reinforced when she accuses Athamas of insulting Venus and Amor. The ambiguous attitude to the gods shown throughout the work is intensified when Athamas promises to take responsibility for her breaking her vows, and sets himself in dispute with the gods. The stage darkens, however, and Hero leaves. There is a sudden noise, the whole grove trembles, and the words of Athamas — "*Quel funeste présage*" (p. 73, what a terrible omen) can be applied in different ways. The last part of the act is allegorical, as Amor, plus Despair and Jealousy attack Athamas, and then demonstrate all the different

curses of love — rage, vengeance. Athamas accuses Amor of tyranny, and now the *Passions malheureux* appear, armed with daggers and torches, surround Athamas and perform those terrifying dances, filling him with despair and hatred and a desire for vengeance. The act closes with a trio by Jealousy, Hate and Vengeance themselves.

Leander and Hero open the third act in a sacred wood by the temple of Venus, and express their love for each other, although they are concerned about Thermilis and Athamas. Hero is still convinced that the temple will preserve her, and Leander decides that he will take revenge on Athamas for profaning the altars of Venus, a curious decision in the context of the basic narrative. Hero is left alone as the festival begins, with Athamas presiding. The festival scene is again prolonged, with dances and with a hymn to the goddess by Athamas and Thermilis, both rejected by those they love. Athamas implores Venus directly to help him to avoid what her son, Amor, has put into his heart, and we may recall the question about who is more cruel, the son, the embodiment of love between humans, or the presiding goddess of love as such. Suddenly, however, the altars break, and everyone flees. Athamas declares that Venus and Amor are both against him, and he and Thermilis swear vengeance on Hero and Leander in a (very) long duet, the third act closing with their desire to “immole deux ingrats” (p. 134, destroy the two ingrates).

Act Four moves to Abydos, where Leander is preparing for war. Arcas assures him that the fleet is ready, and in the second scene Leander's aria tells us that he will follow the flame of love and will live or die for Hero, “vivre ou mourir pour elle” (p. 141). Even in operatic terms the plot becomes a little baffling at this point, however, when Thermilis descends in a chariot from the sky. Leander tells her that she must blame Amor, but Thermilis, again interestingly, replies that he is accusing Amor only to justify himself. She, however, knows he loves another and will seek her revenge; she seems to have become a supernatural being, because she calls up thunder and lightning, and a stage-direction tells us that “les aquilons descendent et enlèvent Thermilis” (p. 147, the north winds come down and carry Thermilis off). Leander remains defiant, however, and the act ends with an again very extended song (and dance) by Leander's sailors, who will set off to brave the storm and defeat the tyrant.

The final act does contain the catastrophe, but Leander is not swimming, and Hero's death is very rapidly presented. We are in the palace of the priestess, by the sea, at night, and there is a tower with a light — not the celebrated torch, but a kind of lighthouse (*pharos*). Hero herself has forebodings and prays for gentle winds, although Neptune continues to rage. The final part of the work is occupied largely by choruses from Hero and the priestesses, who ask for a calm sea, and from the sailors suffering in the storm. Hero and Athamas continue

their conflict, and Thermilis, arriving again on a cloud, conjures once more the storm and the lightning, and demands that Leander should die before Hero's eyes. After extensive musical indication of the storm, the chorus of sailors is at first defiant, but gives way to a very much repeated *nous périssons*, we are doomed, as a chorus of priestesses comment on the *spectacle fatal* and express their horror. Athamas meanwhile tells Hero that her pity only increases her offence, although in the end he acknowledges that he has no defence against a just pity. The sailors sing that "Les flots ont englouti le vaisseau de Léandre," (p. 215, the waters have engulfed Leander's ship), and Hero realises that she too must die. Her final words echo Ovid and other earlier works as she blames herself: "Dans l'abîme des mers je te vois expirer. J'entens tes derniers cris, ta mort est mon ouvrage" (p. 218, I see you die in the depths of the seas, I hear your last cries, your death is my doing). But she goes on to say that love will unite them on the dark shore, and that they will never be separated — again a familiar concept — and throws herself into the sea as a final chorus laments this miserable fate.

The gods do not have a clear role. Hero feels safe at the altar of Venus, and accuses Athemas of blasphemy, but this is at best ironic and at worst hypocritical. At the catastrophe, Athemas at least feels defeated, but this is a small point. The most active of the gods is Amor, and more specifically his personified and all too human attendant emotions. The most enigmatic figure is Thermilis, a woman scorned, who then calls up the winds and storm which will be the end of Leander. There is no background to her love for Leander, who has patently been with Hero for some time before the work starts. Hero does refer to the cruel gods in the last scenes, but whether the blame is to be laid at their door is debatable, and she blames herself for Leander's death.

Leander is drowned when he is coming for Hero, and she blames herself and throws herself into the sea. Hero is a prince, but an enemy of Hero's overlord and admirer, which provides for the obstacle to their love, rather than Hero's priesthood. Only the conclusion is familiar, and since the work is a musical spectacle, it is probably not appropriate to probe it too closely. The orchestral score with stage directions does give some idea of what it may have been like in production, and underlines the problem of examining the story in other than strictly verbal forms. The music will have emphasised the emotions and the story, the dances will have provided a different dimension, and although the final chorus of the sailors, repeating *nous périssons* more times than might be thought possible, goes far beyond modern tastes, the combined effect of all these elements, plus the spectacle in the theatre as such, would leave the audience with the feeling of a tragic love destroyed by jealousy, hate and despair, rather than simply by the *destin déplorable* of the final chorus.

14 Arrigo Boito, *Ero e Leandro* (1879, 1896)

Two composers used the opera libretto *Ero e Leandro* by the Italian writer and composer Arrigo Boito (1842–1918). His original intention was to compose the *tragedia lirica* himself, but instead he gave the text in the early 1870s to his friend Giovanni Bottesini (1821–89), and it had its first performance in Turin on January 11, 1879, with the librettist named anagrammatically as Tobia Gorrio. A little under twenty years later it was used again for an opera by Luigi Mancinelli (1848–1921), performed first in a concert version in October 1896 at the Norwich Festival, and then on stage in 1897 in Madrid. Mancinelli was a conductor at the Metropolitan Opera in New York, the work was performed under his baton three times in 1899 and twice in 1903, and he conducted it in other cities in the years before the First World War. Both versions disappeared into obscurity. That by Bottesini was revived and recorded in 2009, but only small parts of Mancinelli's are available, some indeed taken from cylinder recordings. It is difficult to make musical judgements on Mancinelli, but certainly Bottesini's work merited revival. Boito's libretto is available in various places, with one online edition based on Bottesini's opera, with his staging variations. A piano score of Mancinelli's opera published in the context of the Norwich production (and also available online) has the text in Italian and in a rhymed English translation, and this is used here.²⁹ Boito calls for only three characters, Hero, Leander and the high priest or archon Ariofarne, although there are several choruses. The gods do not appear. The influence of Grillparzer is apparent, especially (though not only) in the role of the high priest, although he is by no means the same as in the German play.³⁰

29 *Ero e Leandro* (*Hero and Leander*), words by Tobia Gorrio, Music by Luigi Mancinelli, with English Translation by Mowbray Marras (London and New York: Novello, Ewer, 1896), cited with literal translation (rather than that by Marras). I have anglicised as elsewhere the names Hero and Leander, but kept Ariofarne, even though Marras has Ariopharnes. This piano score has the complete libretto in Italian and English at the beginning (pp. 2–24) and is available online via the Internet Archive. There is also an Italian text (Mancinelli and Tobia Gorrio), *Ero e Leandro. Tragedia lirica* (Milan: Ricordi, 1897). The online edition based on Bottesini's opera can be found at: librettidopera.it/pdf/eroleandro.pdf. There is a recording of Bottesini's version from a live performance in Crema in September 2009 with the soprano Véronique Mercier, the tenor Gian Luca Pasolini, and the baritone Roberto Scanduzzi as Hero, Leander, and Ariofarne, and Aldo Salvagno conducting (Dynamic CDS 670/1–2). The notes, by Danilo Prefumo, are informative.

30 See Coste, "Rencontre", p. 268. He refers also to the final words of Ariofarne, discussed below. That the equivalent of the high priest here loves Hero himself has echoes of the ballet *La Bayadère* (produced by Marius Petipa in Russia in 1877) in which, in another tale of thwarted lovers and angry gods, the High Brahmin loves the temple dancer. She and

A brief prologue reminds us of the antiquity of the story, inviting the audience to hear about an ancient love which defied the sea, the storms and death itself, a story from the past that “Ritornierà de tempi ancor non nati” — will come back for ages not yet born. It is, moreover, a tale directed at the *cuori innamorati*, hearts in love. The opera proper begins at the Aphrodisia, the games in Sestos, at which the prize for strength and for song goes to Leander of Abydos, who is crowned by Hero. Hero herself is loved by Ariofarne, the high priest, who asks her whether her heart inclines towards the celestial or the terrestrial Venus; her reply is that she seeks only peace. Both points echo Grillparzer, although the high priest’s motivation does not. Ariofarne is insistent, but Hero remains adamant that the grave is preferable to his embraces. A scene follows in which Hero takes from the offerings on the altar a seashell and puts it to her ear. The aria “Conchiglia rosea”, rose-pink seashell, is lyrical for the first part as she hears the ocean and the bees in the oleanders (the name is played upon at different points), but the tone suddenly changes as she hears in the shell a prophecy of horror. Both composers reflect this change with the music (Mancinelli shifts from *dolce e semplice* to *allegro agitato* and there is a similar move in Bottesini).

Ariofarne has noticed the attraction between Hero and Leander, and when he finds them together he pretends that he will overlook the implicit sacrilege, promising Hero to the *adolescente eroe*, the young hero (p. 9). But in an aside — the techniques of the stock stage villain are part of his role throughout — he promises *vendetta ... tremenda*, terrible vengeance (p. 9). There follows, however, an idyll for the two lovers, where each stresses that the Hellespont shall not keep them apart. Ariofarne, however, behind the statue of Apollo, overhears, and when Hero asks the god to reveal her fate (*sorte*), Ariofarne declares simply *morte*, death (p. 12) from his hiding place. The staging is effective. The gods are not in charge, but as in Grillparzer, human malice utilises the gods, or the idea of the gods, for its own ends.

The second act takes place in the aphrodisium, the part of the temple devoted to Venus, and Ariofarne declares publicly that he has had a message from the goddess herself — *La Dea parlò* (p. 12). The chaste Venus wishes to restore the custom that a priestess is kept imprisoned in *la torre della Vergine*, the virgin’s tower, out on the rocks in the Hellespont, in her honour. This is to be Hero, he announces, although in asides he urges her to accept his embraces instead. She refuses again and is declared the virgin of the tower. This is similar to Grillparzer’s version in that she is (forcibly this time) condemned to chastity

her young warrior lover are ultimately united only after death, as in Bottesini’s version of Boito.

just after she has found love with Leander. A scene with arias from all three characters, plus a chorus “Beata vittima”, blessed victim, follows. Leander challenges the priest, but is taken by the guards and banished to Abydos under penalty of death if he ever tries to cross the Hellespont. If Hero breaks her vows, she will be stoned to death. The act ends with a paean to Venus.

The final act is set in the tower, where Hero is meditating on Leander, with the flower that bears his name. Leander had said to her, she tells us, that seven stadia of water will not prevent him from coming to her, and she will set out a light to guide him, guarding it against the winds. Again echoing classical and later versions, she complains that there is no formal marriage, no hymns to Hymen, as she waits for the night. Solo voices from the sea indicate that there will be a storm, however, as she asks the lamp (*facella*) to shine out. Leander arrives, and the second scene celebrates their love — “Vien, congiungiamo l'alme” (p. 19, come, let us join our souls together). They plan to escape together; he will bring a fast ship and they will go somewhere unspecified beyond the sea (“Andrem sovra i flutti profondi”, p. 20). But this duet essentially sets up a fantasy, and it is interrupted by the beginning of a storm. Hero is supposed to sound the alarm, and Leander prepares to leave, but she clings to him and fails to give the signal. At length he dives into the sea (“L'amore è forte/ Più della morte!”, p. 23, love is stronger than death), at which point Ariofarne arrives and wants to know why Hero sounded no alarm. When she gazes out to sea he guesses that Leander has been there, and a lightning flash reveals Leander's body. Hero falls to the ground. Ariofarne declares that she must die, but then sees that she is already dead and that his final vengeance is now impossible: “Vendicato non son! E salva! E morta!” (I shall get no vengeance. She is saved. She is dead). Ariofarne's sexual interest in Hero is far from Grillparzer's high priest (who is her uncle), and he does not extinguish the light (which is not a motif in this version at all); but his ultimate reaction is not unlike that at the end of Grillparzer's play. That Leander dies on his return from Hero at least echoes Martial, and in some earlier plays Hero's death is seen as robbing the gods of victory.

Mancinelli seems to have ended the tragedy at this point. In Bottesini's version, however, a stage direction calls for the lovers to appear at the end on a cloud, immortal, borne by nereids and gods. Ariofarne turns away when he sees the glorification of the two lovers, hiding his face (as does Grillparzer's high priest). However this scene is presented, and whether or not there is a manifest promise of union in the afterlife, the final chorus — “Beati spiriti”, blessed spirits — echoes the sentiments of many earlier versions: “Sia sacra il lido/ Dove s'amarone/ Leandro ed Ero” (p. 24, let this shore, where Hero and Leander loved, be sacred).

Boito's libretto offers a concise version of the story, although the single obstacle to their love is not a parent, but the high priest and rival suitor to Hero. The gods, as already at the start of the nineteenth century, have no direct role, but human malice hides behind them — quite literally at one point — even if in Bottesini's version the lovers are quasi-apotheosized at the end, an addition that is aesthetically questionable at best. Boito shows us in effect an idyll of pure reciprocated love which comes under attack precisely from the malice and jealousy of a love refused and which then demands vengeance. Hero's torch is retained simply as part of the classical tradition declared in the prologue, but the tower has gained in prominence as Hero's prison. The workings of fate, and the proximity of love and death, are strongly shown, and the possibility of escape in real life for the lovers can only be fantasy. Leonard Bernstein and Stephen Sondheim had their modern Romeo and Juliet declare in a duet that there was a place for them somewhere. There was not.

15 Comedy and Tragedy in the Musical Theatre

A number of works which present the story (at least to some extent) defy classification, even though they are occasionally included in lists of operas. Four very different works come into this category, three with a happy end, and one with the original tragic conclusion: a play performed at the court of Versailles in 1751 with no less a person than Madame de Pompadour in the role of Hero; a comic opera or musical with a new and memorable villain; a nineteenth-century musical play about a village production of an opera-ballet about Hero and Leander; and a serious dramatic poem with shadow-images done in Paris at Le Chat Noir at the end of the nineteenth century.

16 Pierre Laujon, *La Nuit, ou Léandre et Héro* (1751)

One of the real curiosities in the whole reception-history of the narrative is what is specifically termed a spectacle, performed in the palace of Versailles on February 25, 1751 with the title *La journée galante*. The librettist was Pierre Laujon (1727–1811), the music was by Pierre de la Garde (1717–92), and the choreography by Jean-Baptiste Dehesse (or Dehayes; dates unclear).³¹ The whole

³¹ *Oeuvres choisies de P. Laujon* (Paris: Patris, 1811), I, 117–29; that volume also contains details of the spectacles presented for Louis xv, and of the performers. There is information about this work on the website operabaroque.fr/LA_GARDE_JOURNEE.htm

work combined opera and ballet, and the third part (which contained both elements) was entitled “The Night, or Leander and Hero”. The cast is memorable: Hero was played by Madame de Pompadour (who was 29 at the time), the Comte de Rohan was Leander, and Neptune was played by the Marquis de la Salle. The work was apparently performed a second time on March 4 in the presence of Louis xv’s queen and the Dauphin and Dauphine (parents of the future Louis xvi).

There are eight scenes in what is really a separate play, and which is treated as such in the collected works of Laujon (with the simple “Hero and Leander” title). The first, set at night, has the pair vowing their love in face of opposition from their parents. Hero is consecrated priestess of Venus, and Leander swims away. Hero laments his absence in the second scene, but then there is a general celebration of love, and in the third a dance by the people of Sestos is interrupted by a storm, from which they flee in the fourth scene. The next two scenes show the catastrophe. Leander’s voice is heard, and he is drowned, and then Hero throws herself into the sea. The two concluding scenes seem to hark back to Bracciolini’s happy end, as the tritons bring Leander, and the nereids Hero, to Neptune, who in the final scene grants them immortality, and we end with a celebration of love’s victory. Hero and Leander have a duet beginning “Triomphe Amour!” now that “nos coeurs sont unis pour jamais”, free of “les plus cruelles peines”, so that “nous sommes immortels tous deux” (triumph of love ... our hearts are forever united ... the most cruel sufferings ... we are both immortal). The chorus picks up the triumph of love as the work ends. This time the gods are entirely on their side, and have united them for ever, exchanging their mortal tribulations for a happy (never-)ending.

Whether there is a connection between this work and the ballet presented nearly half-a-century later by Louis-Jacques Milon (and later still by Armando Vestris) is unclear, but certainly this song-and-dance presentation of the story for (and indeed performed by) the topmost echelon of French society has a place in the history of the reception of the story. The speculative immortality sometimes offered in literary works as an answer to the tragedy, that the pair at least live on in literature and fame, is again made concrete by the gods, proclaimed by all the gods of the sea, accepted by the principal characters, and underlined in a final chorus.

17 **Isaac Jackman (Libretto), William Reeve (Music), *Hero and Leander. An Operatic Burletta* (1787)**

The term ‘burletta’ is a flexible one, its meanings including a ballad opera, one example of which is the two-act comic piece with a libretto by the Dublin-born

Isaac Jackman (b. ca 1750), originally a lawyer, who wrote several farces and comic operas between 1777 and the end of the century. The music was by William Reeve (1757–1815) and the text consists of rhymed dialogue with a great many songs, duets and choruses. It might in modern terms be called a musical or musical comedy. The background of the production is of independent interest. It was written for the Royalty Theatre, which opened in 1787 in the East End of London (it burnt down in 1826), but which was not a so-called ‘patent theatre’. This means that it did not have a licence to put on serious ‘spoken drama’ and was restricted to musical productions, pantomime and comedy. Jackman, who was involved in polemic-writing about this system of licencing, commented on his work with tongue firmly in cheek: “I thought poor Hero and Leander ought to be introduced to the public, without being considered ‘wagrants or wagabones’; I did intend to souse Leander in the waves, as a part of the old romance, and to have a requiem sung over his manes; but a wicked wit told me, that such a denouement would be tragedy, direct, and against the law”.³² The comic-dialect reference to vagrants and vagabonds is an allusion to the Vagrancy Act of 1744, which included ‘players’ under that general heading.

It is clear from Jackman’s comment that the plot was entirely familiar, and in fact the burletta assumes the background (Leander regularly swimming to visit Hero) as having happened before the action starts. Although there are occasional links with the familiar story as motifs are taken up and used, mainly quite capriciously, this entertaining musical romp does not have a great deal to do with the tale as such. In fact, this work reads like a comic counterpart to the opera-tragedy by Lefranc, in which Hero also has a despotic suitor, and where the swimming has also been removed from the story, although this time Leander does not (quite) turn up with a battle-fleet. To an extent, to be sure, the comedy depends upon knowledge of the original, but it is also a product of its time in that the central figure is a theatrical Turkish despot-villain, Abudah (Mozart’s *Entführung aus dem Serail* was in 1782). The geography of the original narrative is still vaguely present, though the Hellespont does

32 *Hero and Leander, A Burletta: Two Acts, as it is performed at the Royalty Theatre, Goodman’s-Fields* (London: the author, n.d. [1787]); the final page (p. 16) carries an advertisement for one of the prose chapbook versions (“just published” “price six-pence”). Jackman’s text is also in (and here cited from) Isaac Jackman, *Hero and Leander. An Operatic Burletta in Two Acts*, in: *The British Drama* (London: Jones, 1824), I, 213–18. These and other versions are online. Jackman’s comments are on p. 213. The proprietor of the theatre was John Palmer (1742–96), and his brother William had the role of Abudah in the production, while Hymen was played by a boy. A puppet opera of 1991 by the American composer Marti Epstein (b. 1959) for string trio is based on this work. Another burletta, by William Leman Rede (1802–1847) again with the title *Hero and Leander* was apparently produced in 1838 in London, but a text could not be located.

not specifically divide Europe and Asia — Leander is from Abydos in ‘Natolia’, while the action is in Sestos, so that the context is Turkish.

We begin with songs welcoming the day, the first solo coming from Hero, and comments are made by others that Hero is nineteen and is sad because she is not married. A song underlines the joys of marriage. Suddenly, however, there is a storm at sea, an echo of Leander’s final night; but this time a ship (thought to be from the enemy state of Natolia) is wrecked, and amongst the crew is a disguised Leander. At this point the plenipotentiary Abudah arrives on an elephant — a novel and memorable feature, if also a somewhat demanding stage-direction — and wishes to know if there were any women on the ship, because these are what he wants, even though he claims already to have a great many. When told that there are none, he rules on the prisoners:

Let them all breakfast,
Each a loaf of bread
And then let every prisoner
Lose his head. (p. 214)

His bloodthirsty approach is developed in comic fashion throughout. He is referred to regularly as a “three-tailed bashaw”, now a particularly recondite and odd-sounding piece of slang apparently derived from the word ‘pasha’, specifically one entitled to three horse-tails on his standard and hence a military commander. The phrase is used in a transferred sense for a self-important and arrogant *miles gloriosus*. The prisoners promise, ungallantly, and in any case in vain, to send for their wives for Abudah, but he still refuses to spare them, with a further song of violent intent. He is, however, besotted with Hero, as he declares in a song: “As I’m a soldier great and stout/ This girl has turn’d me inside out” (p. 215). Hero and Leander now recognise each other, and as Abudah tries to take Hero, Leander attacks him. Leander is stopped, and the ever-inventive Abudah suggests several ways in which he will have Leander killed. Leander reveals who he is, and Abudah recounts the outlines of the narrative for us in basic, but less than classical terms:

This is the squire, that braves the Hellespont
And steals at night to madam hot-upon’t.
Zounds! I’ll souse him in a tub of pickle;
And, as for Miss, her toby I will tickle.³³ (p. 215)

33 We may recall Jackman’s claim that he had decided against sousing Leander in the Hellespont (his rhyme for which is hard to forget). According to Eric Partridge’s *A*

Hero and Leander plead for mercy in a duet, and Hero promises that if Leander is spared, she will agree to marry Abudah. Leander is aware that this is a ruse, and Hero promises to Abudah to be his “spouse by night and by day” (p. 215), a distortion of the classical notion of her as spouse by night and chaste by day. Abudah agrees, on condition that the prisoners all leave and never return, on pain of ever more inventive pain. The first act ends with a chorus of happy prisoners.

The second act opens with a sorrowful song by Hero’s mother, and then Abudah has a brief song declaring that when they marry joy and bliss shall reign, adding, however, that if she refuse him, the shore will be drowned in blood and he will roast everyone. At this point word comes of a ship arriving from Natolia, and a prisoner from it reveals that Leander is coming back to carry Hero away. Leander himself is then seen rowing across (in a boat, rather than with his arms as oars), towards a candle in Hero’s window. Leander wakes Hero with a song, she replies, and they plan to flee, but are taken by Abudah’s men, who were lying in wait. Abudah now somewhat predictably demands Leander’s skull for use as a punch-bowl. Leander sings a sentimental song about how “I die content because I die for you” (p. 217), Hero responds with a plea to the gods, and then Leander sings again, asking them to protect her. Abudah, meanwhile, is still lovingly planning more details of Leander’s imminent demise, which is now to involve hot cauldrons, jellyfish stings, and bottling his blood. But we are approaching the finale and a *deus ex machina* is positively overdue. We have already spotted Minerva and Hymen “in the back Scene” (p. 217), and they now come forward and release Leander. Hymen joins the hands of the principals and sings an aria about the joys of marriage. Abudah has to give way to Minerva: “Your power, Madam, certainly prevails./ Wisdom, I find, pays no respect to tails” (p. 217). The joys of marriage are celebrated in an extended chorus for the finale.

The work belongs within the extensive sub-tradition of travesty or burlesque. The final stages of the story have been recast with a somewhat rapid happy-end, and the pantomime villain (who is the most striking character) has to give way. But amidst all the entertaining nonsense there are still elements of the tradition, and the effect of parody always depends upon knowledge of the original in any case. Leander rowing towards the candle in Hero’s window (we have had the storm which cast him ashore already) will have raised a smile, and we are then given the standard musical-comedy or pantomime alternation of sentimental love-ballad and mustachio-twirling horrors from the dastardly

Dictionary of Historical Slang (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972 [the abridgement by Jacqueline Simpson]), p. 976, “tickle the toby” was slang for “smacking the bottom”, although predictably it could apparently have a coarser meaning as well.

stage-Turk. There are a lot of songs, and the dialogue is exaggeratedly comical and only occasionally coarse. But Hero and Leander still have to be saved by the gods.

18 Heinrich Rüstige and Ernst Pasqué, *Hero und Leander* (1868)

Performed in 1868 in Magdeburg, this German work is effectively a meta-version of the story, a three-act comic opera or musical comedy which uses the narrative within its plot both as a ballad and as an opera-ballet. Wilhelm Wenzel Steinhardt (1819–99) was the composer and also director, and the text is by Heinrich Franz Gaudens Rüstige (1810–1900) and Ernst Pasqué (1821–92).³⁴ The intricacies of the plot need not be given in detail; suffice it that the impresario Baldaja is producing, in an Italian village in the eighteenth century, an opera-ballet of Hero and Leander which will star Giuditta and (Elgardo) Turbini in the title roles. These are not quite rude mechanicals, but the situation does echo Shakespeare's Pyramus and Thisbe to an extent. The story of Hero and Leander is given in a comic ballad in the first act. They are in love, "Doch die Alten merkten was/ Und verdarben ihr den Spaß" (p. 10, But the oldies saw something was up/ And went and spoiled their fun). In the ballad, Leander tries to swim through the storm, but alas, his love is rather suddenly cooled; Hero runs outside and "mein Roman — der war aus" (p. 11, as for my plot, well, that's the lot!). There is a rehearsal of the proposed ballet-opera based on the story at the end of the second act, which is interrupted when the entire cast is arrested. The plot is worked out in the third act, which actually contains the ballet and opera in which Giuditta and Turbini as Hero and Leander come together, and a priest marries them at the end. The whole thing is somewhat tangential to the familiar story, and a happy end is provided, not actually for Hero and Leander, but for their players within the play.

19 Edmond Haraucourt, *Héro et Léandre* (1893)

The final piece in this section is the most difficult of all to classify, and yet is one of the most striking re-tellings of the narrative. It could have been treated as a modern play, or as a set of lyrics, even as an experimental work, although it

34 H. Rüstige, Ernst Pasqué, *Hero und Leander. Komische Oper in 3 Akten*. Musik von W. Steinhardt (Darmstadt: Herbert, 1871). There is an online copy from the Library of Congress.

was presented with music. Where an early version used marionettes, this representation uses silhouettes. *Héro et Léandre*, which the French writer Edmond Haraucourt (1856–1941) termed a dramatic poem, was performed at the Paris cabaret theatre in Montmartre, Le Chat Noir, in November 1893. It was one of the shadow-plays (*théâtre d'ombres*) for which the theatre was well-known in the last decades of the nineteenth century, with cut-out figures (by the artist Henri Rivière, 1864–1951) behind a bright screen to represent the action. The text was spoken by two performers, one functioning as a chorus, mostly using prose, and commenting on the action (“Je reste plein de bon sens au milieu de leur folie”, p. 3, I remain full of good sense in the midst of their madness). The other spoke the verses attributed to the characters, mainly Hero, Leander, Hero’s vindictive mother Anaxo, and Aphrodite/Venus and Eros. The work was accompanied by music composed by the brothers Hillemacher, Paul Joseph Guillaume (1852–1933) and Lucien Joseph Edouard (1860–1908).³⁵

It is divided into three acts — the meeting of the pair (*le rencontre*), a time of separation (*l'exil*) and the union (*l'hyménée*), each subdivided into tableaux. The work opens with Venus bored with her immortality, and wondering what mischief her *méchant garçon* (p. 4) is up to. He says that he has an especially interesting project in mind, and the pair begin to watch the action, which begins with a group of virgins in Sestos enjoying themselves on the shore (swimming naked, a light eroticism less problematic in a shadow-play), interrupted by the arrival of a boat with *éphèbes*, young warriors, including Leander, a poet who has composed an ode to chastity. The maidens flee when the young men disembark, but Hero remains. Leander approaches and thinks that he has encountered Artemis. At this point Eros drops one of his arrows between them, at which the Chorus comments: “Car le véritable amour est maladroit” (p. 9, true love is clumsy). But it affects both of them. Leander offers a Persian flower to Hero, picking up on another of the regular elements of the tale: “Fleur d’Europe, dit-il, je t’offre cette fleur d’Asie” (p. 11, flower of Europe, I offer you this flower of Asia), and with it he offers her his soul. By chance (the Chorus comments on the role of *hasard* in love) Leander comes the next day to the temple and gives Hero a poem. Gradually over the next few days she permits him to kiss her robe, her forehead, and then her mouth, and eventually he seeks her out at her home. The action changes now, however. We have had thus

35 Edmond Haraucourt, *Héro et Léandre. Poème dramatique en trois actes* (Paris: Charpentier et Pasqualle, 1902). The first performance was at the Chat Noir on November 24, 1893, and the text refers to the music by the Hillemacher brothers and the silhouettes by Henry (sic) Rivière, as well as the two performers of the spoken text. The work is discussed in Didier Coste, “Recontre”.

far an idyllic, quasi-anacreontic coming together of the pair, with no obstacle to their love, but now one emerges in the shape of Anaxo, Hero's widowed mother. She tells Leander that Hero does not love him, and then ensures that she is kept from him by having her dedicated to the goddess at the next festival. The mother can object to the love in some ballads, but this is far more specific. Hero is consecrated, with Leander in the crowd, and she herself proclaims that she has been sacrificed ("le sacrifice, c'est moi", p. 23), and describes herself, in an adaptation of the maiden/wife motif, as *la vierge veuve*, the virgin widow. However, her dreams are not dead, and at the end of the act we hear that the goddess, to whom she prays, will still protect her.

Leander has lost his love, and in the second act wanders aimlessly. The Chorus notes acidly that the opportunity for him to become a monk does not yet exist. He rejects several female companions, then eventually takes one as a *cache-chagrin* (p. 30), but, we are told, no-one tells Hero of this (and we recall her fears of a rival in Ovid and elsewhere). Now, however, Leander sails to Sestos, and aided by Eros, comes to Hero, climbs up to her window and they fall into each other's arms. There is already much play on the combination of love and death.

The final act shows us their union, the tragedy, and what happens after death. Leander comes to Hero many times, and to avoid the suspicion of the people of Sestos, he does so by swimming. She is afraid for him, but still wants him to come. The Chorus reminds us that "ils étaient en vérité fort jeune l'un et l'autre" (p. 45, they were both of them really very young). Hero dries Leander (as in classical texts) and holds him to her, but they remain chaste for a long time — *aimons-nous doucement* (p. 53, let us love gently) — until Hero murmurs *je le veux* (p. 56, I desire it).

Leander is observed by Anaxo, however, who wants vengeance, and invokes Hecate in a kind of spell. She seems to be an echo not just of the wicked nun or the mother in German and Scots ballads, although she does not directly extinguish the torch, but also of the storm-raiser Thermilis in Lefranc's opera. A tempest arises (Hero, setting up the torch, had called to Leander, wanting him, though not believing that he will come), and Leander struggles, asking aid from Aphrodite/Venus. His words are once again familiar, albeit far more specifically directed than in Martial's epigram:

Je ne peux plus, la terre est loin, la mer profonde,
Fais que je vive et je vivrai
Mais si l'ordre est fatal et il faut que je meure,
Maîtresse, accorde nous du moins encore une heure
Et prends-moi quand je reviendra (p. 62)

(I can do no more, the land is distant, and the sea is deep; if you let me to live I shall live, but if the order is the fatal one and I must die, mistress, at least grant us another hour and take me when I return).

In a striking variation, however, the wise Venus has pity for Leander, but precisely does *not* grant his wish, because the idea of love is better than the reality: “les meilleurs baisers sont ceux qu’on donne en rêve” (p. 63, the best kisses are those given in dreams). The unreal has taken pride of place, reversing Hero’s dream in Ovid. Leander dies as Hero waits and weeps, shielding the torch with her cloak until it pales at dawn and she sees the dead lover, drops the torch, cries out and throws herself into the sea. In the penultimate tableau they are joined in death, and the final section contains the blessing of Venus, which explains the nature of her decision: “les fiancés sont plus heureux que les époux,/ Et l’amour doit craindre la vie” (p. 65, the betrothed are happier than those who are married, and love ought to fear life). What Venus has done is to show pity by *not* saving them, so that they remain in the earliest stages — both painful and hopeful — of love:

Vous avez cru que l’aube eût duré tout le jour
Et j’ai pris en pitié votre douce ignorance,
Pour ne donner qu’à vous le plus pur de l’amour,
Le désespoir et l’espérance. (p. 66)

(You thought that the dawn would last all day — I took pity on your sweet ignorance so that I could give to you alone the purest parts of love: despair and hope).

The gods did not cause the tempest (unless we credit Hecate, called up by Anaxo), and even the role of Eros and his arrows as the initiator of the love is ambiguous, an accident, a chance, elements that are part of love in any case. And yet here, more than in many versions, the gods are still in control, bored with their immortality and seeking to test and prove love in mortals. Most often the drowning Leander calls upon the gods, who do not hear him. Here Venus *does* hear him, and could save him, but allows them both to die so that their love never grows stale. Other explanations are found in serious and comic versions of why the gods do not intervene, but here Venus has said that she will protect the lovers, and her refusal to help is (for her) a positive one. It is sometimes explained that the intensity of the love between the two is what will endure as they live on in story. Here, what they have forever is not a lasting and all-encompassing faithfulness to each other, but young love with

its mental anguish, despair, and the hope at the dawn of love — the dawn at which Leander must leave.

What the role of the music was and how it enhanced the work we cannot tell, and we do not have the silhouettes. But the text remains one of the most thoughtful, and one which demonstrates more than many the underlying truth in Ovid's exploration: that they are both very young. Venus ensures that they stay that way. The question of the obstacle to the love is also well-handled. The role here of the wicked mother may echo the ballads, but Anaxo intentionally exploits Hero's role as a priestess to keep her from Leander. But the Chorus has the enigmatic last word. He tells us that, as Venus delivers her explanation, the god Mars (her own immortal lover) is standing in the corner, laughing.

20 Conclusion

Grillparzer's strictures notwithstanding, it is possible to consider the words without the music, and sometimes, too, we can gain an impression of the overall effect from scores, performance details, or in some cases recordings. One might guess even without recourse to the recording of Bottesini or the score of Mancinelli, that Hero's "Conchiglia rosea" aria in Boito's libretto, in which she seeks guidance about her destiny, would contrast a lyrical opening with an agitated conclusion. It may well be that the words were written — Boito was after all a composer himself — with this kind of musical effect in mind. However, the notion of a prophecy of doom at that stage is of interest.

Not only are there some memorable new means of presentation noted here (marionettes or silhouettes), but various new elements or variations within the action. Dramatic versions in particular call for additional material, either to explain gaps in the received narrative, such as the nature of the obstacle to the love, or simply to bulk out the story. Some striking additions are indeed made, which can be both idiosyncratic and important in the reception of the story, as when Haraucourt makes Venus fail deliberately to save the lovers so that their love is, as ever, preserved for all eternity, but in its earliest and best stages. Grillparzer's high priest was an important innovation, but making him, as Boito does, into a rival suitor for Hero's love and permitting him to use her role as priestess imprison her is a variation which goes back to the chapbooks. Hero's own exploitation of her sacerdotal role in Lefranc, and her mother's use of it as a weapon are all distinctive variations.

Noticeable once again is the division between serious and comic versions. Jackman's Turkish despot as a rival for Hero's hand is just as villainous as Boito's Ariofarne, although the one is comic, the other serious. Sometimes

we are offered pure tragedy, at others the customary tragic story with an augmented vision of a happy after-life for the lovers, and on yet other occasions comedy as such, with Jackman's addition of an elephant to the plot especially hard to forget. One might even propose a whole new sub-genre for the presentation of the narrative, that of the spectacle. Indeed, some of the more curious presentations offer a degree of fascination in regard to social history, and it is notable that versions of the narrative were given in the palace of Versailles and at the equivalent of the music hall in London in the eighteenth century, and at the end of the nineteenth in a Paris cabaret and at the Metropolitan Opera in New York. The versatility of the material remains.

Modern Experiments

Außerdem ist es zu bezweifeln, ob es uns Heutigen noch erlaubt ist, Liebende darzustellen. Ein Zeitalter, das so einseitig auf die Erhaltung des Daseins aus ist wie die unsere, vermag nicht einmal mehr von Erfüllung zu träumen. Und was sich nicht träumen läßt, hat keine Wirklichkeit.¹



The story of Hero and Leander is still regularly included in collections of tales from antiquity designed for readers at different age-levels, sometimes describing it as a myth. It is instructive to look first at just one of the very many popular retellings, this time one specifically for children.

1 Arthur Mee, *The Children's Encyclopedia* (1908–1964)

The Children's Encyclopedia was founded by Arthur Mee (1875–1943) and was published in sections, and then as an eight-volume or (after 1922) ten-volume set from 1908 to 1964. In America it was entitled *The Book of Knowledge*, and it was translated into several languages. It sold very well indeed over the whole period of its existence. One of its sections consisted of “the great stories of the world that will be told for ever”, and that of Hero and Leander is included. The authorship of the individual sections is not indicated, and it is also difficult to establish precisely when it was written, since the publications were undated. The text used here is from an edition published between 1945 and 1952.²

- 1 Hans Erich Nossack, *Spätestens im November* ([1955] Munich: dtv, 1963), p. 175: “Moreover, it is doubtful whether it is still permissible for us today to depict lovers. An age which is as one-sidedly concerned with the preservation of existence as ours is no longer even capable of dreaming of fulfillment. And what can’t be dreamt has no reality”. Nossack’s novel has been translated as *Wait for November*.
- 2 Arthur Mee, *The Children's Encyclopedia* (London: The Educational Book Company, nd. [1908–1964]), x, 6816. There is no indication of who wrote this version of the story. The number of volumes and the different bindings are a guide to dating but are not reliable, and the story

The publication did not shy away from difficult or complex stories, although in a context clearly intended for children, some adjustments need to be made, especially when, as here, sex is an important theme. Here the tale begins with Hero as a little golden-haired girl, dedicated by her parents to be a priestess in the temple of Venus at Sestus, and she grows up content with her solemn duties. She encounters, however, a “dark and handsome youth”, with whom she falls in love. A crucial comment is now inserted: “Then for the first time, Hero understood how her parents had wronged her in childhood”. If suspected of loving Leander, she would be subjected, we hear, to a terrible death. Leander swims the Hellespont, but the story requires some adaptation here for young readers: “Hero held a torch on the shore to guide him. Every night they would sit in the lee of the rocks talking of their separate lives. None knew of their secret meetings save one friend of Leander’s”. Then comes a stormy night when no-one would dare to swim, but Leander does so, warning Hero in advance: “Hero saw a lantern waved three times on the opposite shore and she knew Leander was coming to her”. She lights her own torch and must re-light it often as she watches for him, “drenched to the skin and agonised with suspense”. She tries to convince herself that he has turned back, but “soon news was brought that his dead body had been washed up. Then she ran to the highest cliff and flung herself into the sea”.

Nothing more is added in this brief version, which is nevertheless remarkable in several respects. There are no gods, and some of the usual details are missing, such as Hero’s tower. The Asia/Europe point is not made, and the Hellespont named only casually. More significantly, there is no consideration of any post-mortem events: they both die, but there is no joint burial. Hero does not even see the body — news comes to her. That their encounter is not expressly sexual is necessary for the context. Some elements, on the other hand, are new, or at least less usual. Her golden hair is easily understood as a contrast with Leander’s dark good looks; it appears elsewhere and is occasionally even discussed. However, Leander’s signal does *not* appear anywhere else, and the brief reference to his friend is curious. It is something of a blind motif, although it is perhaps intended that the friend would identify the body.

What is the story about, therefore? Often it is a story without a beginning, but here it has one in the dedication of the golden-haired child to the temple. Almost the sole authorial comment is that Hero now realised that her parents had wronged her, so that it becomes a tale not of clandestine sexual love and permanent union, at least in posthumous fame (even that point is absent

is cited here from a ten-volume set issued after the death of Hitler but before that of King George VI. The American edition was published by Grolier in New York.

except in the title of the whole series), but principally of parental betrayal. The tale is one of those “that will be told for ever”, and it uses Musaios for the priestess element, and Ovid in Hero’s suspense as she waits; but it is still different in several respects from earlier versions, and not just in the need to adapt it for children. It is, however, probably one of the most widely-read modern versions, together with the equally brief texts by Edith Hamilton and other popularisers.

2 Some Allusions: Remarque, Wynne Jones, Whaley

The story is also used or alluded to, as one would expect, in modern literary works, to enhance or to emphasise an otherwise separate plot. There is a reference in the novel *Die Nacht von Lissabon* (*The Night in Lisbon*) published in 1962 by Erich Maria Remarque (1898–1970), for example, although it is not, as has been claimed, of major importance in the work. It is mentioned when the principal (not the framework) narrator, who has secretly returned to Nazi Germany from exile, follows a light over a river (albeit by way of a bridge) and through the dark town until he sees the light in his wife’s window. Here he thinks of Hero and Leander (an allusion for which the attentive reader is already prepared), but far more specifically his focus is upon the German *Königskinder* ballads, with the negative element of the nun who puts out the light. He is not, he tells us, a prince, nor does he have to cross the Hellespont or the northern seas, although he says that many lights have gone out in his recent past. Picking up on the ballad, he comments that the Germans have the most beautiful folktales, and the cruellest concentration-camps. The main narrator and his wife do fail to escape to America when she dies and her husband remains, but the Hero and Leander tale (or more specifically its reflection in the *Königskinder*-ballads) is not a constitutive element in the way that the Orpheus-myth is, for example, in Remarque’s *Der Himmel kennt keine Günstlinge*.³

In English it has similarly been claimed that *Fire and Hemlock* (1985) by Diana Wynne Jones (1934–2011) makes an early reference to Hero and Leander “both to foreshadow the plot and as a namesake for the heroine’s alter-ego”.

3 Erich Maria Remarque, *Die Nacht von Lissabon* (Cologne and Berlin: Kiepenheuer and Witsch, 1962) (translated as *The Night in Lisbon*). *Der Himmel kennt keine Günstlinge* (*Heaven has no Favourites*, also as *Bobby Deerfield*) appeared in 1961; see Brian Murdoch, *The Novels of Erich Maria Remarque* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2006), pp. 193–223. Remarque regularly alludes to classical themes, and I note the use of the Orpheus myth, but not the allusion to the *Königskinder*. The singing (or whistling the melody) of the folk ballad is used, incidentally, as a central (and titular) element in a novella of 1884–5 by Theodor Storm (1817–1888) with the title *Es waren zwei Königskinder*. The music is even cited in the text in notation.

There is a throwaway reference to the name Hero, which is adopted by the female central figure as a play on the concept of *the* hero. Apart from a further mention of a painting depicting a mermaid carrying what seems to be a corpse underwater (which might possibly — but only possibly — echo our narrative, and which does point on to the end of the novel), the tale of Hero and Leander does not foreshadow a plot in which both central figures survive. Wynne Jones's haunting fantasy-novel is in fact based very closely on the two English fairy ballads 'Thomas the Rhymer' and 'Tam Lin', which do not accord with the tale of Hero and Leander.⁴

A third and more recent novel which uses the story for emphasis does so, however, in a clear and prominent fashion and exploits it, moreover, in a highly unusual manner. The tale of Hero and Leander is not the theme of the whole work, but it stands, as one might guess from the title, at the climax of the novel *Hellespont* by James Philip Whaley, which appeared in 2012, published in the form of an e-book (another small novelty). Described as a "gay love story", the first-person narrative which comprises most of the work recollects the emotional and sexual development, varied and often graphically described, of the narrator as a boy at an English public school, ending in the mid-nineteen-sixties (a time-indication is provided with a reference to the Beatles in Hamburg). From an early stage he is fascinated by Greek tales, and these provide a structure for the whole work. Many of them are recounted (often set apart by italics) in the course of the novel and linked with the narrator's personal experiences at different times; he is offered hospitality at one point, for example, by a modern Procrustes in the form of a serial murderer who tries to kill him.

The title of the work already presumes some awareness of the tale of Hero and Leander (or at least of Byron), but the legend is, like the other Greek tales, also made explicit at the appropriate point in the work (as indeed is that of Helle). At the end of the novel the narrator, about to leave school, has begun a sexual relationship with a young man slightly older than himself, a former fellow-pupil who is now tutoring him in Greek. With him he shares a love of Greek stories, and they plan to visit and perhaps even swim the Hellespont together. Before they can do so, the lover is killed when he dives, in the dark of night, into what proves to be a drained swimming pool. The narrator considers jumping from the high board and killing himself, as Hero had leapt from a cliff in the version given, but he does not do so. Afterwards he arranges for the other's ashes to be buried in Greece. Although the tale of Hero and Leander

4 Diana Wynne Jones, *Fire and Hemlock* (New York: Greenwillow, 1985) has quotations from 'Tam Lin' as chapter-heads throughout. The comments on Hero and Leander and the novel are made in an English-language Wikipedia entry on Hero and Leander.

is only one of the Greek stories alluded to or used within the novel, its position at the end gives it greater significance. Apart from the sexual difference, which is the most striking variation, there is an interestingly ironic twist in that the lover is killed this time by an *absence* of water. Since the relationship is a homosexual one, the roles are less easy to determine, although the younger narrator is presumably cast in the role of Hero. There are clear points of contact with the story as such in the mutual attraction, in the death at night in the course of a failed swim, and in the (at that time necessarily) clandestine nature of the relationship, before legalisation in the Sexual Offences Act of 1967 and the lowering of the age limit to 18 in the Criminal Justice Act in 1994. The shift from what is usually a very clearly heterosexual relationship into a homosexual one is yet another demonstration of the versatility of a tale which is enduring, but which also lends itself to experiment.⁵ The main story is set within a framework in which the narrator, writing in Greece, near the grave, wishes to record, to memorialise the story of his one-time lover, the culmination in the main narrative of the various different sexual experiences he has had in the course of his early life, including an affair with the other man's sister. In the framework we learn, however, that he has since married and has children.

3 Experiments

As already shown, there are independent and unusual literary versions or reflections of the whole story in a variety of different genres in the period from the mid-twentieth century onwards, ranging from J. P. Richardson's pop-song to Heinz Erhardt's comic poem which scales down the *Heroides* into a picture-postcard. Two very different literary works from the end of the twentieth and the start of the twenty-first century may serve as a suitable (although doubtless not final) end-point to the tradition thus far. Both test in different ways the nature of literary production and especially what we might now call the interface between the story and its recipients. It is worth recalling that the word 'experimental' has been applied already to Ovid's treatment of the story, for presenting the lovers at a time when they are separate from each other, and the first of the relevant modern versions also separates the lovers in a deliberately experimental novel which offers, it has to be said, quite considerable interpretative difficulties. The second is generically different, and hard to categorize, a graphic novel originally produced in the context of a musical performance

5 James Philip Whaley, *Hellespont* (Amazon Kindle e-book, 2012). The author is English and has written film scripts.

but published independently as a book. The novel is about the story, while the comic is a version of it. For all their modernity, Musaios is present in both, and in the comic even provides the words, albeit in German translation.

4 Milorad Pavić, *Unutrašnja strana vetra, ili, Roman o Heri i Leandru* (The Inner Side of the Wind or The Novel of Hero and Leander) (1991)

The Serbo-Croatian (more accurately Serbian) novel by Milorad Pavić (1929–2009), translated into English as *The Inner Side of the Wind*, appeared in the original in 1991, and in the translation of Christina Pribičević-Zorić in 1993.⁶ It has been described both as an experimental and as an interactive novel, and the writings of Pavić, who is celebrated for literary innovation, often make unusual demands upon the reader. His *Dictionary of the Khazars* is set out as three separate dictionaries, and there is also a female version, while his *Landscape Painted with Tea* is based on a crossword puzzle. Even before attempting to locate *The Inner Side of the Wind* in the tradition of Hero and Leander, then, its bibliographical format has to be explained. The novel keeps the stories of Hero and of Leander (or rather, of *a* Hero and *a* Leander) physically separate — the reason for this soon becomes apparent — while at the same time ensuring that either tale may be read first. The book is printed and bound in such a way that the title page can be followed by the Hero section, or it can be turned upside-down, opened at an identical title page, and begun with the Leander section. The dustjacket of the English translation does, it is true, refer to the ‘front cover’ and the ‘back cover’, but this difference is based presumably solely upon the legal requirements of placing the ISBN and bar-code on the back of the dustjacket and the author’s name on the front. Without the dustjacket, there is no way of telling which is the front of the book, and in any case, the dustjacket can simply be reversed; the spine is printed both ways. In the age of the e-book, this printed volume is a striking literary-bibliological artefact.

The interpretative problems go beyond the choices involved in how to read the book. Serbian is not one of the mainstream languages of Europe, and accordingly most readers will approach the work by means of a translation,

6 Milorad Pavić, *The Inner Side of the Wind, or The Novel of Hero and Leander*, trans. Christina Pribičević-Zorić (New York: Knopf, 1993). The original appeared in 1991 (Belgrade: Prosveta). References are to the separately paginated sections. See on the work Westphal, “Les Eaux de la mer agitée.” In this case, and in that of Feuchtenberger, an e-book edition would present problems.

of which there are already twenty in different languages. Reading a translated work from a distinctive cultural context implies a special trust in the translator, not just for the technical accuracy of the rendering, but in the awareness that words or phrases may have a nuance or a second meaning in the original which can be difficult or impossible to convey in the new language. It is a problem with which any translator is familiar, even with a relatively close cognate. The reader faces, finally, the danger of missing the significance of specific allusions to Serbian history or culture, in the context of which both parts of this work are set. This is particularly apparent in the Leander section, which takes place during one of the many periods of conflict between Austro-Hungarian and Ottoman forces over Serbia and over Belgrade in particular. A few place-names from the area may have acquired a new resonance in the light of recent history, but outside help is needed, for example, to establish even the identity of the fourteenth-century Serbian prince Lazar Hrebeljanović (Leander, p. 39). The interplay between the Eastern Orthodox church and the Catholic military forces may or may not be familiar, but the problem is compounded because this Leander appears to have belonged originally to the even less well-known Bogomiles “of yore”. This is something for which in the novel he has to atone before he can become a monk.⁷

The couple are separated in this work not by the Hellespont, but by a period of a few hundred years, so that they never actually encounter one another, although they do both respond to the classical story of Hero and Leander. Part of the game played by the author is to make the reader draw links between the two. Thus in the Hero section, our Hero-figure reads part of a French translation of Musaios (lines 169–71, Hero, p. 15) in which Leander gazes at Hero’s delicate neck. She herself (Hero, p. 24) has “a lovely, swanlike neck”, and the Leander-figure’s own neck is stressed in *his* story because it invites the attention of a sabreur who wants to cut off his head; he cites the same passage of Musaios (Leander, p. 76). Pavić uses motifs from the original tale scattered or distorted through his two narratives. There are candles and towers, and Leander swims the river twice, though it is the Danube and not the Hellespont, and while Hero is not a priestess, he is a monk. Letters also play a part.

The content of the novel cannot be discussed without a (completely arbitrary) decision as to which part to take first; the work is nevertheless called in the second part of the title either *the* or *a* novel (the original has no article,

7 Leander, p. 19. The Bogomiles were associated with the Cathars and their dualism was condemned and their books burned by a synodal decree in 1140, though they did survive in the Balkans. Pavić also uses the word ‘Patarene’, usually ‘Patarine’ or ‘Patarin’, which referred originally to a Catholic sub-group, but comes to be used also for the Cathars in general.

a feature of Slav languages) of Hero and Leander, so that we may begin with Hero, even though her tale is chronologically later. Hero (her actual name is Heronea) lives in the early part of the twentieth century; the man who eventually takes the name of Leander is rather earlier, in the late seventeenth. Pavić has commented in a conversation about his works that he attempted to avoid in his novels the one-way street that leads from birth to death, and this avoidance is apparent here.⁸ The style, too, is distinctive, whimsical, even absurd, and the term “folk-surrealism” has been applied to it. Hero keeps “her refrigerator full of love stories and cosmetics”, can “keep silent in both major and minor keys”, is “so fast she could bite off her own ear; she digested food before it left her mouth, and realised that every couple of centuries some women’s names become men’s, while the rest remain the same” (Hero, p. 3f.). That speediness is applied to Leander too, in fact, who does actually lose an ear.

Heronea Bukur is a Belgrade chemistry student who keeps a close record of her dreams, to which she affords great importance; she is fascinated by language, and she also knows that she will die at a particular time (twelve-o-five — just after noon). She tutors a boy in French (and theoretically also his sister, although whether the latter exists or not is unclear), and concentrates on the tenses, making him list present and past tenses in one column, the future, the conditional and the participial (“which denotes action parallel to the main clause”, Hero, p. 9) in the other. The child’s mother eventually claims that the children (however many there are) can manage the future but have difficulties with the present and the past. Time is a recurrent theme in the whole work.

When she gives the boy a French text of Musaios to translate, he decides that she actually is Hero and places her into the story, although she claims to be only the “Hero who bites her nails” (Hero, p. 15). She tells the boy that Hero gave Leander, who was in love with her, a light while he swam, and that the boy would not understand why she was not afraid of him. She also says that in one story Hero’s brother lured Leander out to sea with another light and let him drown in the dark. This is a version, at least, of the story as told in Straparola’s *Le piacevoli notti*, where it is actually the Hero-figure who is lured away to her death by her brothers, although there the Leander-equivalent is also a kind of monk or hermit, as in Pavić’s tale. The boy approves of the brother’s act in the story, but Hero brings things back to reality by pointing out that her own brother is studying music in Prague. Her relationship with her brother will play

8 Thanassis Lallas, “A Conversation with Milorad Pavić”, originally in the *Review of Contemporary Fiction* 18 (1998), at: dalkeyarchive.com/a-conversation-with-milorad-pavic-by-thanassis-lallas. Studies of the work are predictably rare, but it is discussed by Didier Coste, “Rencontre,” pp. 269–71.

a part in her death, however, and it remains open whether Pavić is deliberately using Straparola, whose version of the tale is set in Dubrovnik/Ragusa, and if so, whether the reader would recognise it. It is of interest, too, that Hero relates not the straightforward narrative found in Musaios and elsewhere, but precisely this unusual one, and that in a distorted form.

Hero herself becomes increasingly obsessed with the future and especially the future perfect tense, forgetting the past and present both in French and in her own language, so that she worries about what will happen to her present time if she leaves it. She decides first to blow up her chemistry laboratory at twelve-o-five, then rejects the idea and goes to tutor the boy again. There is always an empty chair present for the possibly non-existent sister, and now she leaves another chair, which, she explains, is for Leander.

When she goes to visit her brother in Prague the story changes in a way not unfamiliar in (and perhaps in imitation of) earlier presentations of the narrative: there follows an interpolated separate story. This is a short story written and interpolated by Hero herself, who often smuggles them, we hear, ("like a cuckoo egg", Hero, p. 26) into translations she has done of other works. Her tale is of an Austro-Hungarian captain who suddenly finds he has someone else's soul — a woman's — when he is captured and imprisoned for his ties with the Kingdom of Serbia. He is also preoccupied by time, and we are told that death "weaves time like a spider" (Hero, p. 30). This is, of course, Hero writing about time, and the (post-Einsteinian) flexible relationship of humanity with time underpins the whole novel. In his cell the captain types, without a candle, what turns out to be either nonsense or, as Hero's brother comments, an invention by J. S. Bach played on a typewriter rather than a piano. The captain is subsequently shot and buried, still, however, with slight toothache. Time and reality have not established themselves, although the literary use of metempsychosis, or at least the travels of the soul, is not unfamiliar: we may think of works as different as John Donne's unfinished poem *The Progress of the Soul* in 1601 or Vicente Minnelli's film *On a Clear Day You Can See Forever* in 1970. Are the original Hero and Leander occupying the bodies of Heronea Bukur and Radacha or Milko Chihorić, called Leander?

In the Hero-section the author presents us with some further distanced material: a description of a trip to Italy by Hero and her brother "found in the papers of one of Hero's girl-friends" (Hero, p. 38). The brother is a musician, and there is considerable play on the notion of the quartet. She had left an empty fourth chair for Leander earlier on, and in his tale Chihorić-Leander plays as part of a quartet. The description revolves, however, around the attempts to locate a performance of a play based on Musaios, from two advertisements, one giving a list of the manuscripts and early editions (including the 1494

Aldine edition, which is also referred to in the Leander section), the other giving an excerpt which is quite unlike Musaios, a fragment of dialogue between Hero and Leander after death (Hero, p. 40). This is one of the points where the two stories overlap, as the play-script Leander here comments that although he has only been dead for three days, his death might last from now on into future centuries.⁹ Whether there ever was a performance of a dramatized Musaios within the fictionality of the novel is left unclear.

The narrative perspective shifts yet again as the narrator now introduces himself as someone who had played music together with Hero's brother, and reports for us Hero's brother's own account of his relationship with his sister. There is again a considerable amount of surreal detail, but the essence is that Hero had a relationship with a lieutenant Jan Kobala, and that she committed suicide by blowing herself up at twelve-o-five when Kobala eventually rejected her, after engaging in a relationship with the brother himself. The brother, who keeps his watch set always to that time, wonders whether it was Kobala's or his betrayal that caused her suicide.

The narrator (who is of course also within the fictionality) describes the rest of his dealings with Hero's brother down to the latter's death in his own voice, telling how he reached Warsaw on a stormy night too late to save Hero's brother, who was lying in bed with a candle nearly burnt down; some of the trappings of the death of Leander have been borrowed. The narrator now quotes a final letter from the brother to the effect that Hero had died because of him, and that she and her brother were both using Kobala to torture each other. As the narrator describes how he fashioned a death mask of the brother, however, he reveals that he (as suddenly omniscient? or as a representative of death?) knows secrets, and tells us that Hero did not commit suicide at all, but had been murdered in a fit of jealousy by Jan Kobala. What had been concealed from her brother was that Kobala had cut off and kept her head for three days before turning himself in. "According to the crazed lieutenant", the Hero-section ends, on the evening of the third day "Hero's head cried out in a terrible, deep masculine voice" (Hero, p. 77). The surrealism is completed with what seems like an echo of the head of Orpheus, but is the voice perhaps that of Leander, the other half of the book, who died (we shall learn) at twelve-o-five, her appointed, but apparently not fulfilled time?

The Leander section is also based around Belgrade, but around two hundred years earlier. Leander has various names — Radacha or Milko Chihorić at birth, and Irinei Zahumski (as a monk, after the church of Our Lady of

9 The couple very rarely converse after death, although they are both interrogated (separately?) in the other world in the version by Giovanni Grasso: Montiglio, *Hero and Leander*, p. 201.

Zahum) — but he is eventually named after the classical Leander and is referred to as such throughout his story. It is set in the period of Ottoman and Austro-Hungarian conflicts over Belgrade in the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, although the various historical allusions are largely unfamiliar to an audience outside the Balkans. The family, apart from Leander's father, who plays a part in the narrative, are mostly builders, we are told, and Leander spends much of the work building churches and ultimately a tower. There are links not only with the Hero-section, but also with the classical narrative itself, as when Leander, as part of a quartet of players of a folk-instrument, the *santir*, visits both Sestos and Abydos, and the balance between the two worlds of Asia and Europe is reinforced throughout with the conflict between Turks and Austrians. Otherwise we are told that his story is a *fabula rasa* (Leander, p. 17), an empty story waiting for him to move into it. Leander, like Hero, lives at great speed, faster than anyone else. The first expression of this is, in fact, premature ejaculation when he tries to lie with the girl Despina, from whom he parts, convinced that "touching was impossible" (Leander, p. 18). Hero died, according to her brother, "thinking touching was possible after all" (Hero, p. 76). Leander decides to become a monk, and is admitted finally in 1689; but on that day, and just as he is hoping to learn to read, the Turks sweep in following the death of the Austrian General Johan Piccolomini (in Prizren on November 9th — some of the dates are very precise), and Leander (as Irenei) escapes with his friend Diomides Subota, trying to avoid all the armies, but building small churches on the way. Issiah, a sabreur who claims to be fighting for neither side, captures him and prophesies that he will one day cut off Leander's head, but for the moment merely slices off an ear.

When the Turks retreat, Leander returns to Belgrade and to his father, and is taught to read by a Russian. He teaches him Latin, and uses a Latin translation of Musaios, which Leander's teacher tells him is from a version printed in 1494 (Hero had a French one and saw a poster reference to the Aldine edition). Leander is given his "sixth name" from the legend, when he is asked by his teacher what the obstacle was between the two lovers. The passage is a crucial one for the whole work. Leander has, we are reminded, been to Sestos, Abydos and the Hellespont, and "knew that Europe was separate from Asia not only by water but also by wind — that is, by time. And so he said that perhaps it had not been water and the waves of the sea that had separated Hero from Leander". He is, we are told, thinking of the girl he had been unable to reach, but when pressed on his meaning, he replies: "Perhaps it was the waves of time, not of the sea that separated Hero from Leander. Perhaps Leander swam through time, not through water" (Leander, p. 53). He accepts the name Leander in spite of laughter from the teacher, and learns the poem by heart.

Later (after 1717), the two towers at the Sava gate in Belgrade are to be rebuilt, one of them by a famous architect; while the second and more difficult one is undertaken by Leander. As he is doing so, his father, who has bouts of prophetic wisdom, tells him that “death is a complex affair, a job and an effort that’s harder and longer than human life ... Your death can live twice as long as you” (Leander, p. 74f.) Just after this, Leander completes his tower and as he does so, realises that he is reciting the text of Musaios’s poem — the same lines that Hero had given as a translation about how Leander stared at Hero’s beautiful neck (Musaios 169f.) We learn now that he has memorised the Greek text as well, and he also cites the last two lines of the poem in Greek — “and Hero lay dying beside her beloved, united and together in the hour of death.” (Leander, p. 76; Musaios 341f.). Thereafter, however, he forgets it entirely.

The narrator now cites a letter from Leander in which he describes learning from the soothsayer (who has appeared before) the date of his own death by fire on April 22, 1739. In the narrative proper, Leander is captured by the Turks again and tells them how to enter Belgrade. He himself escapes death by sabre and hides in his tower, which has been mined, and which blows up at twelve-o-five on the date given, a time when the clocks on both towers show the same time and the weathercocks the same wind. The two sides of the wind in the title have been united. The time links him with Hero, although neither has experienced the death foreseen for them — Leander by beheading, Hero by explosion; in fact they have experienced each other’s death. She is beheaded, he is blown up at five minutes after noon.

This is a difficult work. Every novel is interactive in its demands upon the reader (the detective story is the most familiar example), but the demands made by Pavić go beyond the usual. This is, of course, a danger because the reader also has the choice of simply abandoning the work, but the key to maintaining the reader’s interest and desire to interpret lies in the second part of the title. The whole work is in a sense a sustained allusion in that the protagonists are not the Hero and Leander of antiquity, of whose tale the reader is reminded in that second part of the title, but people at a geographical and chronological distance from the original and also from each other. They come together in the reader’s mind with the original protagonists and they are united in their deaths (at different times) just like the Hero and Leander they represent.

In most cases (including that of the *Heroides*) it can be assumed that the reader knows how the story of Hero and Leander is *supposed* to work out. The titular couple are separated by water and perish in it. Pavić replaces water with time, and (relative) time is a key element in both parts of the work. The two stories are separate to an extent, but are linked by individual elements and especially by the story of Hero and Leander itself, which appears in different

forms even within the novel. The attentive reader is aware of this in whichever order the parts are read.

The development and longevity of the individual's death, too, has long been a literary theme, exploited, for example, in Rilke's poem 'Orpheus. Eurydike. Hermes', in which Eurydice's already grown and developed *großer Tod*, great death, precludes any reunion; or in novels like *Spätestens im November* by Hans Erich Nossack (1901–1977), cited at the head of this chapter, which has the woman in a complex and unhappy love-triangle telling the story after her death, and which has the interesting comment: "Alle großen Liebespaare der Weltgeschichte sind im Sinne der Welt gescheitert, womit die Welt sich trösten mag" (all the great pairs of lovers in the history of the world have, in the worldly sense, ended in failure, something the world may comfort itself with).¹⁰ In Pavić's novel the couple do not come together in the pages of the book, any more than they do in Ovid's *Heroides*. While Hero and Leander are sometimes presented speculatively as being together for all eternity in the Elysian Fields, a more believable unity, which is also regularly made explicit, lies in their perpetual togetherness in posthumous oral or literary fame. Here it is a matter of surmise on the reader's part whether the pair will ever meet, or have met, in any existence. But they are together in the book, the parts of which are so inventively kept separate but equal.

Musaïos seems at first glance to be the predominant influence here, quite specifically by way of the edition of 1494 and the manuscripts. However, Ovid's separated couple are ancestors in another sense. Do these two meet at the centre point of the work, as claimed on the flyleaf? Certainly that is where they both die, but they really meet only within the narrative link based on Musaïos. It is worth recalling that even the work of the Greek grammarian is deliberately made elusive within the text; Hero uses a French version of Musaïos, Leander a Latin one first (though he quotes the last lines in Greek), while Hero and her brother fail to find the mysterious play based upon it at all. Both encounter the edition by Aldus Manutius, but Hero also knows a variation on the story. Can the original story be grasped at all, or is it only there on the inner side of the wind, the side which remains dry when it blows through the rain? That definition appears (with an ironic attribution) as a motto at the start of Hero's story, and it is quoted in Leander's. At the start of Leander's tale, the equivalent

10 Nossack, *Spätestens im November*, p. 175. There is a reference there to Francesca da Rimini and Paolo. The passage cited at the head of this chapter comes in the next paragraph. Nossack was aware of the difficulties of writing any love story in the modern world, and stressed the now dominant themes of separation and isolation. His comments are relevant to the two experimental versions discussed here. For Rilke's poem, see Rainer Maria Rilke, *Gesammelte Gedichte* (Frankfurt/M.: Insel, 1962), pp. 298–301.

motto claims that he was half of something, a magnificent half, while she was a small, disorientated whole. This is yet another of the author's games; the magnificent and the magical balances the small and disorientated, but are they really two halves?

Ovid's influence is just as strong here, if not stronger, and not only since both characters write letters which are then presented to the reader. Ovid's protagonists are unequal, although they will both die, something they both foresee in various images, which are of course not specific. Above all they are always apart from each other, separated as they write letters which the reader — who even then was familiar with the outcome — is presumed to be reading (long) after their deaths, leaving open the question of whether Leander read Hero's letter at all. Ovid's protagonists are separated by the waters, but also by time, which, since the personal experience of time is relativised, seems interminable to them, though the outside audience knows that it is a fixed number of nights. They are separated from us, from the readers, by time in a different aspect. Time is a major theme of Pavić's novel, but the work also makes statements about a classical story which is above all about death, the parting which is always the other side of love. In this novel, death may — possibly — join, rather than separate the pair. Time, dreams, death (and the unifying and separating combination of love and death), and how they interact, are all themes which inform a great deal of modern literature, and any number of artistic, scientific or literary names might be adduced in the elucidation of this text: the surrealists, Freud, Einstein, Thomas Mann? Be that as it may, Pavić offers an original response to a legend which everyone knows, including this time the main characters themselves.

5 Anke Feuchtenberger, *Hero und Leander* (2004)

Anke Feuchtenberger was born in what was the German Democratic Republic in 1963 and has produced a substantial body of work in the field of illustration. Since she is principally a graphic artist, one might well question the inclusion in this study of her *Hero und Leander*,¹¹ given that purely iconographical representations of the story have not otherwise been considered. It is, however, a

11 Anke Feuchtenberger, *Hero und Leander* (Zurich: Edition Moderne, 2004). The work is unpaginated. References are to the line-numbers of Musaios. It may be noted that there several short animated cartoons telling (or adapting) the story, sometimes with modern-dress characters, available by way of YouTube as "Hero and Leander" or "Hero en Leander". While none is especially distinctive (and they may not always be accessible), they are yet again an indication of the ongoing interest in the story.

publication in book form, almost square (21×19.5cm) with a descriptive text in distinctive lettering above almost all of the forty full-page illustrations, which use, for the most part, red for the principal characters and black for background details. The text is selected and adapted from Hans Färber's German translation of Musaios. The work was produced in conjunction with the first performance of the fourth symphony, "Hero und Leander" by Daniel Hess (born in Zurich in 1965) by the International Youth Orchestra Elbe-Weser on 18, 19 and 20. August 2004 in Stade, near Hamburg. However artificial (although inevitable) it may be to sever it from the music, the book and the relationship of text and illustration may still be examined as a literary production, one as bibliologically original as that by Pavić.

The antiquity of the story, and the role it has played over the centuries, are discussed in the final pages of the work, and what is included in that afterword is instructive. An outline is provided in a form almost as succinct as that of the second Vatican mythographer, although it does have Hero as a priestess, and it adds not only details of the length and breadth of the Hellespont, but the fact that Byron swam it. Next comes a translation of the two *Heroides*, and a German version of Byron's five quatrains, plus extracts from his letter to Henry Drury and from his journal. Following these are details of the artist, of the composer (with notes by Hess on the symphony itself), of the conductor, Andreas Mildner (who commissioned the musical work), and of the orchestra. A bibliography lists Musaios, Ovid and Byron, and to these are added details of the comic poem by Heinz Erhardt, Grillparzer's play, Hölderlin's lyric, Marlowe's fragment and Schiller's ballad, but not, oddly, the *Königskinder*-songs.

Detailed comment cannot be made on the music, but the composer has provided some background on his interest in and use of the narrative. His starting-points were a painting by Edmund Kanoldt (1845–1904), largely of romantic rocks, cliffs and stormy sea, and the poetry of Schiller and Hölderlin. The symphony — Hess refers to it as an opera without voices — falls into eight sections, which may be translated as: prologue, Leander, Hero, sea-music 1, night music, sea-music 2, Hero's wait, epilogue. Hess has given some details of what he is trying to do with specific instrumentation (such as a glockenspiel to represent the light), and he characterises "das todbringende, umbarmherzige Meer ... und den grausamen Überlebenskampf Leanders" (the deadly, merciless sea ... and Leander's cruel struggle for survival) with aleatoric elements in the music. A rough correspondence between the drawings and Hess's divisions of the story can be made.

Feuchtenberger selects and abridges or conflates lines from Musaios to tell the story, in which she draws Hero as a young, vulnerable, almost childlike small figure, "with no experience of love" (Musaios 30f.). The first view of her

is as she sits on her bed in her underwear (she is dressed that way throughout), in front of a TV set. She is not manifestly a priestess, although she lives in the watchtower (in *Musaíos* 32 *purgos*, a tower or turret, in German *Wachturm*) of her ancestors. She bows to them — they are drawn in black and white — in the second picture. However, she often looks longingly at Leander, not during the festival of Venus as in *Musaíos* 103–5, but as a champion swimmer on the screen of a TV set. In the first picture the screen is black, then white but blank, and then, under the heading of how Leander reacted to her with covert nods (106), we see the top of a high-diving-board. For the lines in *Musaíos* telling how when it gets dark (110) Leander dares to approach her (112), the corresponding images, still on the TV screen, are of Leander in trunks, cap and goggles preparing to dive. The intriguing idea of their separation by different realities (albeit not as drastic a division as in Pavić's novel), with Hero watching, and Leander apparently on the television, is developed when, as he dives, the captions are from Hero's initial rejection of him, with the declaration that cannot enter her virgin bed (123, 127). Again no reasons are given for this attitude, but still Hero watches him from her bed as a distant figure on the TV screen. As in *Musaíos*, this Leander seems to take her would-be rejection as encouragement and executes a complex and showy dive into the water (129, 132).

The effects of love are already being felt by Hero, who is, however, not depicted in the next few illustrations together with Leander, but as engaged in her own private auto-erotic fantasy, stroking herself in her tower (160f., 162, 166), which she seems to be thinking of leaving, something indicated by the device of the thought-bubble. Leander meanwhile, also spurred on by love, thinks of approaching her (196f.) — this is again in a thought-bubble which contains the lamp, here an electric one. He makes his claim that he will swim through any waters to reach her (203) and come to her as a husband (207). In his comment about her keeping the lamp lit (216f.), he points to the now more prominent electric light.

There is no actual love-scene beyond a vague indication of sexual activity and some auto-eroticism on Hero's part, and we move now to the fatal crossing, with a syncopation of two scenes in *Musaíos*. Three illustrations relate to his first, successful crossing (254f.), swimming towards the light and to their sexual encounter, but then we are shown him drowning, with *Musaíos*'s description of his final struggle as he drinks without being refreshed (328). The captions from *Musaíos* in the next two pictures, however, refer to the night of their consummated love (279f.) Hero watches the again black screen of the TV (with only Leander's swimming-cap visible, and she is shown unplugging the TV set under the heading "es löschte die treulose Leuchte" (329). The agent — the cruel blast of wind, which in *Musaíos* actually "extinguishes the faithless

light” — is not mentioned. There is a small variation in the order of lines from the Greek text now, as morning arrives (335), and then we are told that the life of Leander was also extinguished (330), and he appears to come out through the broken TV screen. Hero scans the sea (336f.) looking for Leander, but the light had been extinguished (338). In two images without superscripts, Hero now plugs in the broken TV set, through which Leander’s body emerges, surrounded by the pool of water (which in *Musaïos* is a feature of his *first* arrival in the tower), and electrocutes herself — that picture is done cartoon-fashion with Hero in negative, white outline on black, and the water around Leander red. The pool of water is black in the final two-page image, which records how she “lay in death united with her lover, at his side” (342).

Feuchtenberger’s take on the narrative is modern, and the use of the television image is surreal. What is more striking is the presentation of the relationship, underscored by the selection of lines from the German translation of *Musaïos*. A great deal can be read into the combination of word-selection and image, and some aspects relate to the earliest versions of the story, Ovid as much as *Musaïos*. The pair are separate here, but they are also unequal, and there are still open questions. Hero is the smaller figure, perhaps in thrall to her ancestors and her obligations, even if she is not specifically a priestess. We are made aware of her sexual awakening, even if there is no clear consummation scene. It is interesting that words which in *Musaïos* refer to that night — a passage about the unusual nature of their wedding-night — are here used for her night of anguish instead. Is her entire relationship a fantasy? Leander, whose figure is always drawn larger, is Byronic: self-conscious, seemingly arrogant in his awareness of his capabilities. The text provides food for thought about the separate natures of the two, and the classical passive/active gender separation underlined especially in Hero’s letter in Ovid is clear. The graphic style is distinctive, but the pictures present the complete narrative, and with the selective text we are presented with the constants and with all the ambiguities that are there at the very beginning. It is also an open question of whether and to what extent, or from which source, the audience as recipients of this text knew the story, or whether a modern audience more accustomed to the graphic novel as such would in fact first have read the synopsis and perhaps the Ovid in the final pages of the volume. A German audience, at least, might be expected to know it from the reworkings by Grillparzer, Hölderlin or Schiller, all mentioned in the additional material, although as Remarque’s allusion indicates, the most familiar link is probably the *Königskinder* ballads. As with Pavić’s novel, this is again a demanding work.

6 Conclusion

These two final modern texts differ from each other radically in some respects, but it is intriguing that while both use Musaios as the surface structure, Ovid, who presented the separation of the lovers — though not their death — rather than their union, is nevertheless very much present. It might be thought that the story has been told so often that it is no longer possible to add anything new, but the tradition not only continues (as with Didier Coste's poems) but continues to be innovative (as in the variation at the end of Whaley's *Hellespont*). Ovid experimented memorably with an already known story, and so do both Pavić and Feuchtenberger.

Some Shallow Story of Deep Love?

Wil de laatste dichter het licht uitdoen?



Why, then, have so many writers (let alone artists and musicians) been moved to tell again a rather brief story that was already perceived as ancient and well-known in the earliest written versions that we have, two millennia ago? The answer clearly lies in its dynamic, its potential for expansion and explanation; and in the fact that the core of the story is human at the most physical level. It is a tale of intensity in love, of the emotional anxieties and stresses associated with it, of effort in the face of the elements, of social pressures, of sexual union, of the conflict of love and duty, of separation, and of death, all centred upon two attractive young lovers.

In its most basic form of all, however, it is a story about a young man who undertakes successfully the physical task of swimming a famous and sometimes treacherous body of water. This begs questions, and the process of answering these and the additional questions that arise from those questions, is the way the story works. Why does he swim? That he crosses the body of water for love is the first answer and the next stage of development in the story as narrative. That he accomplishes this feat more than once, but then drowns in pursuit of love is a further stage. The development of the narrative is incremental, depending upon the posing and answering (in different ways) of a cumulative series of questions which arise naturally from within the basic structure. Those questions are not absolutes, but human or personal, for all that there is — as Donne and some of his imitators made clear — an elemental quality about the tale of two lovers against the world. The greater questions like “can we bring back the dead?” or “how was the world created?” or “how did evil come into the world?” are the province of myth, and usually demand *a priori* the intervention of the divine.

The young man from Abydos, Leander, swims the Hellespont from the Asian to the European side to reach his lover, Hero, and then he returns. Why he needs to swim, and apparently to do so in secret, since he swims at night, is unspecified. He does so successfully on one or more occasions, and their

relationship is sexually fulfilled. He can be prevented by bad weather from swimming, and the waters are in any case dangerous. In his final attempt he is drowned in a storm, after which the lover also dies. To help him reach her on the far side of the water the young woman, who lives in a tower in Sestos, lights a lamp or a torch to guide him. The torch is, or can be, important, not least as a touchstone, a significant feature that calls the story to mind; but it is again a development of the story as a story, rather than an intrinsic part of what happens, and there are versions where it is reduced in significance, or even not mentioned at all. Leander is drowned because of the forces of nature, one particular storm in the Hellespont. If it is the case that Leander drowned because he could not see the torch, the new set of questions which arise are: was the storm simply too great and the clouds too dark for him to see, did he swim off-course, did the wind blow it out, did Hero fail to light it, or fail to guard it, or did someone else blow it out deliberately, and why?

In the basic form of the story, no gods are mentioned, and they are not inherent in the story. Leander drowns in a stormy sea. In a classical age, however, the gods form part of a developed philosophy of causality and of nature. The north wind has a name, Boreas, and a personality (even a sex-life), and the sea is controlled by Neptune, a thoroughly capricious and occasionally lascivious god. A further literary stage, then, postulates that the gods caused Leander's death. Divine forces are regularly invented to provide someone or something upon which to place the ultimate blame for aspects of human existence, but letting the gods into this story gives enormous scope for extra development. They can be blamed both for the intensity of the love in the first place (Venus and her son are as capricious as Neptune), and for the death of Leander, where Neptune can be assisted by whole hordes of nereids, tritons, and by the personified winds. Even more specifically, they can be blamed for the failure to save Leander, which is not the same as causing his death. This begs in its turn the question of why they should wish to cause his death or to fail to save him. If they are acting deliberately, are the gods for some reason angry with Leander, or with his lover, or both? Are they generally malicious? Or are they simply indifferent, operating on a different plane to humanity (as personified elements again)? If they *are* angry, however, questions arise as to whether this is justified, and whether the two protagonists deserve to die? Hero regularly curses them, but Leander's act of braving the waters may be seen as hubris, as indeed may the lovers' very persistence with their love. The gods may even be jealous of the intensity of a love which brings them too close to the gods themselves. Sometimes, to be sure, the gods can be co-opted to rescue the situation altogether, either to save the lovers from death, or more usually to transport them to Elysium after death. As the gods disappear, or dwindle to statues

in the temple, human forces can replace them, and may even extinguish the lamp, sometimes, though not always, continuing to invoke the unseen gods in justification of their all-too human actions. In one version, the fate of the lovers is even declared by a human hiding behind a statue of one of the gods. On an entirely human level, defiance of parental or other authority by the lovers might also be a cause for blame.

That Leander drowns can be ascribed more neutrally, too, to Fate or Fortune, either with capital letters, which places it on the same level as the gods, or as a lower-case happenstance, pure chance, bad luck and a stormy sea. If Fate is personified, it (or he, or she) can take on one of the interventionist roles afforded to the gods. Nor need the idea of blame be externalised. It might be argued that on such a stormy night Hero should not have wanted Leander to come (does he blame her? does she blame herself?), she should not have set up the torch, or should have guarded it better. Leander should not have been foolish or so arrogantly over-confident in his own skills, or perhaps so over-full of the sexual desires of youth as to undertake the journey.

The truly protean aspect of the narrative as literature lies in the scope it offers for an exploration of the states of mind of the principal protagonists. This in its turn often depends paradoxically upon the pair being separate from one another, but desperate to be together because of the chemistry of love that binds them. This is something that Ovid recognised, and why he stands at the head of the literary tradition. Hero and Leander, who want more than anything to be together, are separated by space, being on two different continents; by danger, physical in the case of the need to swim the Hellespont; by societal forces of some kind, because the love has to be clandestine. This affords possibilities for longings and anxieties on Hero's part especially: the fear that Leander might not come, that he might love someone else, that he might drown. Leander, too, can wonder about what Hero is thinking, and consider whether or not he should attempt to cross the Hellespont, while his last thoughts on his final journey — as Martial recognised and exploited — also offer opportunities. Once we have (as with Musaios) a full story including the meeting of the couple and the first declarations of love, there is even more scope for an exploration of the progress of love in the young principals; that they are young, or even very young is an element that must not be forgotten. Hesitation, fear of rejection, timidity, the growing awareness of love as such, rather than the specific love for the one person, persuasion — it is easy to see how the apparently slight story can be expanded in emotional terms. Is it love at first sight, and how does it develop towards the sexual gratification which is clearly part of the basic story? The three early versions of the narrative, by Ovid, Martial, and Musaios, provide impetus for the tale over the subsequent

two millennia, and to an extent they also determine the focus. It is significant that early representations of the story in art — as at Pompeii or on coins — show us Leander swimming, the starting point of the narrative, rather than the death-scenes which would become popular in art much later.

Hero, finding the body of her lover, sometimes dies of a broken heart, but more often deliberately commits suicide, usually, but not always, by throwing herself into the sea, sometimes from her tower. This conclusion can beg the narrative question of what happens afterwards? The couple are dead and can be buried together, perhaps commemorated by a monument as a physical reminder of their story. Their death is the factual end of the narrative and anything further is speculation. It is often patently felt that however famous this tragic love may still be, the lovers should somehow be reunited after, rather than simply in death. In a sense, this provides for a happy ending that never ends, and it is sometimes spelt out that Hero and Leander love for all eternity (as they do in the literary tradition, of course), which is a better fate than they had on earth. Literary versions permit speculation on the matter either through the narrator voice (at any point), or by having the protagonists themselves envisage before they die a hoped-for later reunion in the Elysian Fields. Some texts show the audience that this has happened (though we rarely see them talking in Elysium), or may transform them physically after death, having them metamorphose (the influence of Ovid is never far away) into something else in nature. This can also be parodied or travestied, as indeed can everything about the story.

Many of the most celebrated love-stories — Orpheus, Pyramus, Tristan — combine love and death, and the fame of the lovers depends upon their final separation. Death can and does divide the lovers more effectively than the Hellespont, so that any positive interpretation of union in death or the idea of a potential reunion in the Elysian Fields must always be a dubious proposition, however piously it might be hoped and however defiantly it might be presented. Something about this pair of lovers patently *has* lived on and is living still in every version of the story told, and it will presumably live on further. It is of great significance that the story is thought of as an old one even in the very earliest versions.

Some of the open questions about the narrative are provided with answers which require the addition of further characters or circumstances. At an early stage Hero is provided with a companion, who is initially an elderly nurse, but who can be transformed in all kinds of ways right down to a young (and flighty) companion. She can aid Hero in her love-affair, sometimes proactively, or she can be a hindrance. She may be replaced by Hero's mother, who can also be malicious; she may even be supplanted by a false nun who extinguishes

the guiding torch for no clear reason. Towards the end of the tradition, Hero's companion divides, in effect, into two characters: a young woman to whom she is or becomes close, and a high priest who acts (he thinks) as the agent of the gods when he puts out the light. The parents of either of the protagonists may be introduced to explain the obstacle to their love (and need not even appear), but any further characters — friends or relatives of Leander, for example — are extrinsic to the basic tale.

Possibly the major question is why the love needs to be clandestine, and the feat of swimming the Hellespont at the core of the whole narrative is bound up with this. Such an unusual and daring act must be for a reason other than pure bravado, and swimming would be less visible than using a boat. The burlesques sometimes take up precisely that point and insist that Leander simply can't afford one, and even in serious versions his boat is stolen, or wrecked, as logical explanations are sought. But the swimming, and more specifically the nocturnal swimming, is linked with the need for secrecy. Leander leaves Hero again at first light, something which in its turn fits in with a separate long-established literary tradition, that of the parting of lovers at dawn before they are discovered, a motif exploited in the medieval *aubade*. Martial's epigram, in which Leander asks that, if he is to be drowned, it should be on his return, fits into this part of the story, and is an astonishingly fruitful contributive element. Questions also arise regarding the lamp or torch set up to guide Leander: is it ever seen by anyone else and does it — or could it — arouse suspicion? Why does it go out — because of the gods, or the storm, or some human agent? If actively extinguished, then why? And if it simply blew out, was it not tended? Or were its guardians — Hero, and perhaps her nurse — asleep?

Wherever the idea originated of making Hero into a priestess, this is of particular importance in the question of the secrecy of the love. Musaios's religious festival does provide an ideal scene for their first meeting, and later occasion for dramatic irony if this is precisely when Hero is being dedicated to the goddess. Her usual dedication to Aphrodite, however, is double-edged, her new love for Leander perhaps at odds with service to the goddess of love herself. The point is exploited in many versions, sometimes by Leander himself, that Aphrodite *ought* to support their love. There are various different developments of the role of Aphrodite. The first is to set Aphrodite/Venus as the goddess of love in the abstract against the random nature of physical love personified by her son, Eros/Cupid/Amor and his irresistible arrows. The second is a Platonic division between Aphrodite Urania and Aphrodite Pandemos, an entirely spiritual idealisation of love against physical human love, with Hero dedicated to the former while experiencing the latter. One version even has Aphrodite deliberately *not* saving the couple because the early intensity of

love is when it is at its height, and she is preventing them from suffering any later decline in love. Sometimes, though, she is simply jealous of Hero being seen or treated as a goddess.

If it is not presented as a given, the question arises of why Hero should become a priestess at all. She may be forced to do this against her will for some reason, which will then elicit a basic sympathy; or she may do so voluntarily, again for different reasons, and this will influence questions of guilt and tragic irony. Relating her decision to that of a nun taking the veil is reflected directly or indirectly in the tradition.

Questions relating to Hero's choices and to her self-assertion can be central. Indeed, her thoughts and emotions are often foregrounded, more so than those of the essentially active Leander. Grillparzer's early nineteenth-century Hero (and others before) deliberately seeks calm and refuge from a masculine world from which she feels cut off (something she voices as early as in Ovid's representation of her state of mind). Christine de Pizan tries to place her in the City of Ladies, but once she has met Leander, this is not where Hero would wish to be. Grillparzer has her mother extol to her the ultimate happiness of marriage, although all the evidence seems to the young Hero to contradict this — until she meets Leander. The question of marriage is itself an interesting one. Of course, they do not marry officially, though marriage ceremonies are mentioned often and so are the laws of marriage — till death joins them, rather than parts them.

The obstacle to the love of Hero and Leander need not (only) be her role as a priestess. Earlier (it is hinted at in Ovid) and more plausibly, since the pair are patently young, the controlling role of their parents is regularly invoked. This development is understandable. They are from different cities or states, and perhaps their possibly noble parents object to the liaison on political grounds? In a related pop-song many centuries after Ovid the respective tribes of the lovers are actually at war. Within the tradition, the objections may come from either parent (or both parents) of either protagonist, but the actual reason behind the objection is not always clear. In the reductive Scots ballads, where the couple are no longer even royal, the mothers of the Leander and of the Hero equivalents can both be inimical, although we are not told why.

Whatever was made of the story in oral tradition, literary adaptation in particular will make further demands in detail. What are Leander and Hero like in physical terms? How old are they? Their (good) looks are regularly stressed, and so is their youth, since love, young love, sexual love, first love, and love at first sight are all factors of the tale. Hero's beauty and Leander's adventurous courage are tags throughout the tradition, but further questions mount up and are answered in different ways. What do we know about their families? Does

anyone else love either of them? In Ovid, Hero wonders (like other women in the *Heroides*) whether her lover has found someone else, but she quickly dismisses the idea, and indeed, Leander only very rarely looks at another woman anywhere in the tradition. Writers do, however, provide rival suitors (or simply would-be seducers, in the case of Hero) for both of them, some more plausible than others.

How should the audience or reader respond to the story? Despite the sometimes amended ending, the story of Hero and Leander is still about parting and sorrow, and it can be cathartic in the Aristotelean sense, or it can be admonitory in a Christian one. If the love is noble, it can be admired, if not imitated; if it is essentially foolish, the observer might respond with sympathy, but still take it as a warning against excess (and indeed it is used in sermons even without allegorization). Even as a tragic love story, there is an at least temporary happiness, which can be sentimentally comforting, or can throw the ultimate tragedy into even stronger relief.

Whether the story needs to be taken seriously or its elements accepted at face value is a quite distinct question which is answered by the fact that travesties and burlesques of it have themselves a very long and extensive tradition. These are not necessarily parodies, although there are specific digs at individual writers such as Ovid. It is worth recalling, too, that apparently serious literary versions can sometimes touch the edge of burlesque without falling into that category, and not just accidentally through incompetent versifying. Marlowe had plenty of humour in his version, and it is a feature of the whole history of the tale that its reception can either endorse the tragedy of young love destroyed, or can make light of it, and that, too, is a potentially cathartic response. The comic and the tragic versions exist, moreover, side by side throughout most of the tradition, and occasionally a single writer may even treat the story both ways. There is a contrast here with the case of *Pyramus and Thisbe*, where Shakespeare's mechanicals set their comic imprint so firmly upon a story told seriously in Ovid that the original tale needed to be replaced, with a little adaptation, by *Romeo and Juliet*.

It is significant that several of the burlesques pose and then answer some of the open questions posed by the basic narrative in a comic manner. Leander swims, of course, because he obviously hasn't got a boat. Even more strikingly, it is a technique of the burlesques to apologize with feigned seriousness that they are unable to answer questions which are, in fact, precisely *not* worth asking: was Hero's tower round or square? On the other hand, while it would seem highly unlikely that anyone would ever be concerned about what swimming stroke Leander used, one (at least apparently) serious version describes what is patently a front crawl, and one of the more vulgar burlesques has him, for dubious reasons, swimming on his back. It is almost worse to note that one of

the many editions of Grillparzer's play — an otherwise good one, in fact — annotates a line in which Naukleros describes Leander's swimming skills as "the envy of the fish" with the apparently serious conjecture that this "perhaps" (sic!) means that Leander, "as Grillparzer reports of himself, could swim on his back, a feat calculated to make the fish pale with envy". All this intentional and unintentional absurdity does underline once more the cumulative nature of the questions arising from the central narrative. To be fair, the writers of comic versions still had to get over the problem that the story — upon whose familiarity the joke depends — does end tragically, although comic metamorphoses or last-minute rescue by the gods can provide a way out.

The familiarity of the story is part of its history, although there are versions — in the middle ages and in the ballads, for example, or in the pop-song of 'Running Bear' — where the story is reflected without the names of the protagonists, and where knowledge of the original either cannot necessarily be assumed, or is not relevant. In some cases, as with the German *Königskinder*, for example, subsidiary reworkings can themselves become a tradition. This point about familiarity is underscored by a modern German burlesque that, having switched the names, tells the reader sententiously that they would remember the story if they had been paying attention at school. The recent study of some of the modern versions, which has been referred to already, by Didier Coste, who has himself produced poetic reflections of the narrative, has the significant title of 'an infinitely repeated meeting', but it is hard not to sum it all up by citing, as a kind of *cri de Coeur*, the memorable title of an article which is in fact on Musaios: "Wil de laatste dichter het licht uitdoen?" (would the last poet kindly put the light out?).¹

Beyond the human realities of love, sex and death, the equally human experiences of obstacles, misfortune, a dangerous natural world, the fallibility of things, the difficulties of separation, even basic gender distinctions, all play their part. Love does *not* necessarily conquer all, and even where human prohibitions are circumvented, the strongest love can still be defeated by the forces of nature or of bad luck. The tale of Hero and Leander shows the possibilities, the delights, and also the loss implicit in love. Individual writers sometimes try to explain the outcome by postulating the intervention of malicious gods, or fate, but even after the gods have effectively faded from the story — or have become, as in Grillparzer, a distant and abstract concept, capable of distortion in the human mind — the story goes on because of the memorability of the human love and its intensity. Beside references to the reunion of the lovers in the Elysian fields, or to comforting metamorphoses, many versions of

1 Coste, "Une rencontre infiniment répétée: Héro et Léandre". G. J. Boter, "Wil de laatste dichter het licht uitdoen? Over Musaeus' Hero en Leander", *Lampas* 39 (2006), 33–59.

the narrative do just conclude with the shared grave of the lovers presented as a place of memory, of pilgrimage and of wonder.

The story is made to survive by being transformed through constant interrogation. Sometimes, it is true, the adaptation of the tale does not work very well. This is most noticeable in those versions which divide the pair, as in Guillaume de Machaut's artificial argument about which of them was more unfortunate, or Christine de Pizan's bracketing of Hero with women who are abandoned by their lovers (and indeed even with Medea). The gender issue is capable of separate development, but Hero and Leander belong together, even when they are separated not just by the Hellespont, but even by the sea of time. Different genres focus upon different elements in the story, and a precise examination of this would also be rewarding. That some, at least, of the burlesques concentrate upon the sexual aspects is to be expected, and the thoughts of Hero are more fully explored in the lyric or dramatic monologue than those of the active Leander. So, too, the use by so many Spanish sonnets of the final efforts of Leander to swim, echoing Martial, is noteworthy.

In any attempt to pursue a theme through a large sweep of western literature (and even this begs the question of whether they are, perhaps, more eastern parallels to be found), it is inevitable that most of the authors will be male, but the question of authorial gender is not necessarily of special relevance. The emphasis on Leander and upon action may well be a masculine interest, and the apparently passive role of an effectively imprisoned Hero (who can occasionally be treated almost as a commodity) may of course attract criticism, although she can also be proactive in asserting herself and refusing to be an object. Kaspar von Barth uses the tale as a warning aimed specifically at young men, and before him, Baudri of Bourgeuil puts the blame upon Hero. Folk-ballads, however, illustrate the fact that either character may be in the foreground. The Hero-equivalent is central in the *Königskinder* songs, that of Leander in the Scots ballads. We may also remember that in Straparola the female takes the dominant and active role, although this is unusual.

Plenty of male authors also present the psychology of both lovers in detail. Ovid remains the best example for the careful examination and presentation of Leander's eager forcefulness and Hero's equally eager anxiety. Later male writers are well able to present Hero's thoughts from within, such as Hölderlin, Grillparzer or Tennyson. The number of women writers who have tackled the theme are indeed relatively few, but they are varied. The earliest, Christine de Pizan, is perhaps the least satisfactory (in the *City of Ladies*, though not in her ballad) because she separates Hero from Leander, even if the result is not as awkward as in Guillaume de Machaut. The personalisation of the tale by Doña Hipólita de Narváez at the start of the seventeenth century and by Louise Ackermann in the nineteenth rests in both cases on the value of the shared

love. Most recently of all, and on the edge of literature, Anke Feuchtenberger's drawings focus on Hero (in a slightly enigmatic fashion), using the text of Musaios; but she follows Ovid in showing us the somewhat preening, but ultimately unfortunate Leander set against the physically smaller, more restricted (and more interesting) Hero.

In the opening scene of *Two Gentlemen of Verona* Shakespeare has one of them, Valentine, taking his leave of the other, Proteus. The former is about to travel, but his friend is going to stay behind because he is in love. The dialogue is full of word-plays, and to Valentine's comment that Proteus will pray for his success "on a love book", Proteus says that it will be on a book he loves. Valentine is dismissive, however: "That's on some shallow story of deep love", he says, "How young Leander cross'd the Hellespont". Proteus defends the tale, however: "That's a deep story of a deeper love;/ For he was more than over shoes in love". Valentine considers Proteus to be, like Leander, one of love's fools, even if he "never swum the Hellespont". The complex ramifications of the rest of that play are not relevant, although some of the more extravagant dramatizations of the Hero and Leander story *do* echo Shakespeare with the addition of servants, disguises, cross-dressing and betrayals (though never by either of the principals). Proteus, incidentally, claims that his own love, Julia, has "metamorphos'd" him. In the debate between Valentine and Proteus, however, with all the verbal plays on the depth of waters, the story of Hero and Leander can be taken as shallow or deep, as trivial or serious. But the love itself is deep, and deeper.

Elsewhere, Shakespeare's Rosalind had denied that there was a love story there at all, though she still lets Leander swim. It is Byron, however, who takes us full circle. He returned to the absolute starting-point of the story by swimming the Hellespont himself, not for the sake of love, but to provide a practical and affirmative answer to the question of whether it was possible to do so. Yet even Byron's decision to make the attempt was not, or at least not entirely, a reflection of the justification now used regularly for other feats of physical endeavour; he did not swim the Hellespont *simply* 'because it was there', but also in memory of a love story which he knew was ancient, but which was as familiar to him as it was to Ovid and to so many others, and would remain so well beyond Byron's own time.

Possibly there was, once upon a time, a strong young man whose name might have been Leander, who did swim the Hellespont, possibly simply to show that he could. Humans do that kind of thing, and sometimes they do it for love. But they also make up stories, many of them about very basic human urges and emotions, and this is a starting point, the germ of a love story which develops and varies for millennia.

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